Google

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

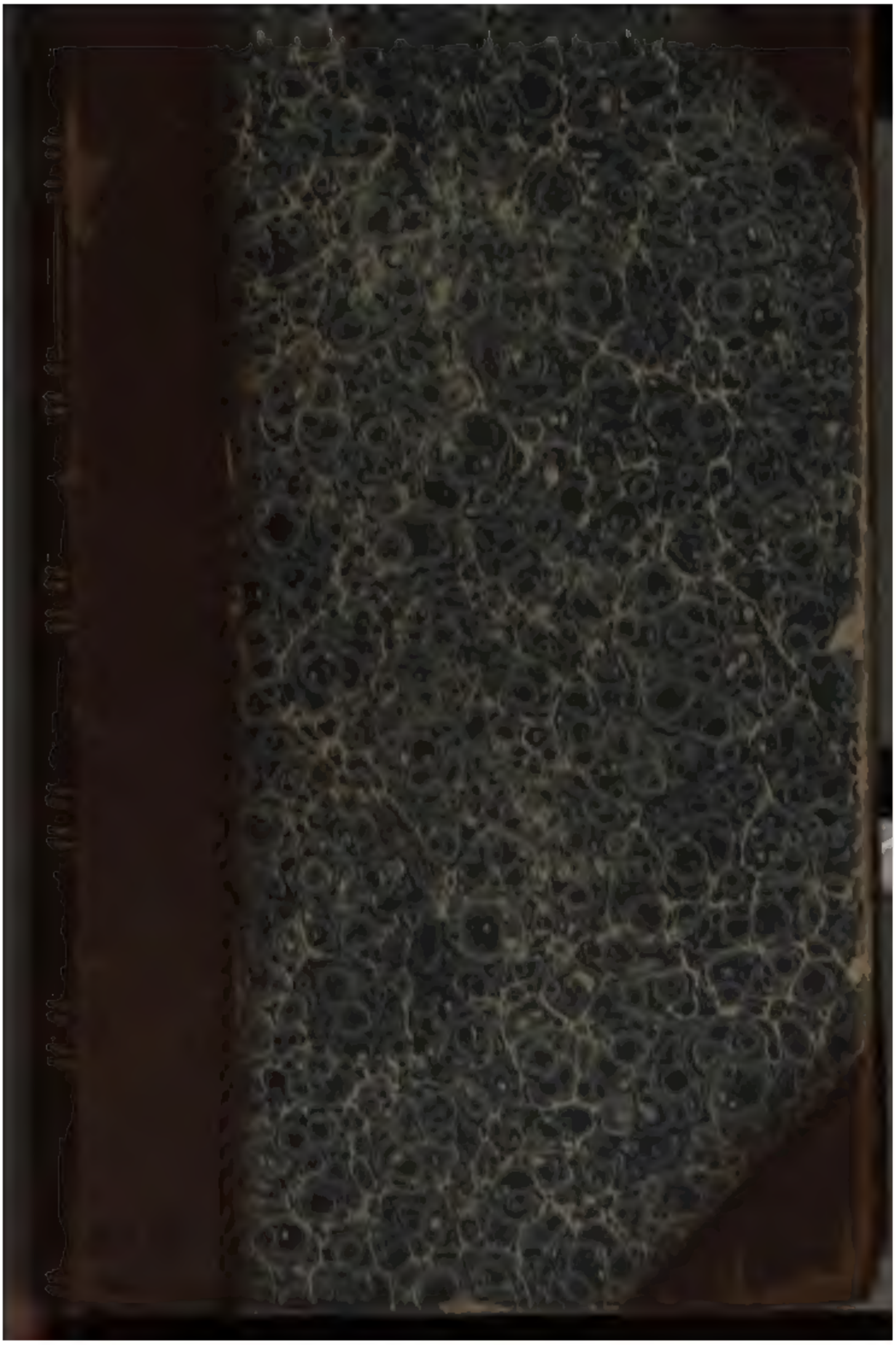
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at http://books.google.com/



42.
463.
600032823M

42.
463.
600032623M

THE MOTHER'S HELP.

LONDON:
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

THE MOTHER'S HELP

TOWARDS

INSTRUCTING HER CHILDREN

IN THE EXCELLENCIES OF THE

CATECHISM, AND OF THE SERVICES

APPOINTED BY THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

FOR THE MORE SPECIAL OCCASIONS WHICH MARK

CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY THE

REV. JOHN JAMES, D.D.

CANON OF PETERBOROUGH.

AUTHOR OF "A COMMENT ON THE COLLECTS,"

"CHRISTIAN WATCHFULNESS," &c.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. G. F. & J. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD,

AND WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL.

1842.

463.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION 1

THE CHURCHING OF WOMEN 7
- Psalm cxvi. 12
- Psalm cxxvii. 19
- The Lord's Prayer 23
- Prayer with supplication 37

PUBLIC BAPTISM OF INFANTS 43
- The first Prayer 48
- Second Prayer 56
- The Gospel: St. Mark x. 13. 60
- Exhortation 64
- The Prayer 66
- Address 70
- The Baptismal Vow 76
- Repentance ..... ib.
- Faith 82
- Obedience 88
- Supplications 89
- The Prayer 94
- Naming the Child 96
- Admission into the Church 99
- Address 104
- The Lord's Prayer 108
- Prayer 117
- Exhortation 119
- Injunction 128

PAGE

THE CATECHISM 130
The Christian Covenant 131
The Creed 134
The Ten Commandments 156
The First Commandment 159
The Second Commandment 160
The Third Commandment 167
The Fourth Commandment 170
The Fifth Commandment 174
The Sixth Commandment 178
The Seventh Commandment 182
The Eighth Commandment 185
The Ninth Commandment 188
The Tenth Commandment 193
The Lord's Prayer 213
The Sacraments 229

CONFIRMATION 243
Prayer for the Confirmed 252
The Collect 260
The Prayer 262
The Blessing 263

THE HOLY COMMUNION 266
Prayer 268
The Ten Commandments 271
Prayers for the Queen 273
The Nicene Creed 275
The Sentences 277
The Prayer for the Church Militant 280
The Exhortations to the Holy Communion 285
The First Exhortation 286
The Second Exhortation 290
Exhortation to the assembled Communicants 294
Address to those who come to the Holy Communion .. 300
General Confession 304

PAGE

THE HOLY COMMUNION (continued):

The Absolution 308
The Sentences of Encouragement 310
Proper Preface for Christmas Day 315
Preface for Easter Day 317
Preface for Ascension Day 320
Preface for Whit-Sunday 322
The Preface for the Feast of Trinity 324
Prayer 326
Prayer of Consecration 328
The Minister's twofold Address to the Communicant.. 334
The Lord's Prayer 340
Prayers 345
The Hymn 349
First Collect 354
Second Collect 356
Third Collect 357
Fourth Collect 358
Fifth Collect 360
Sixth Collect 362
The Blessing 363

THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY—The opening Address 366
The Charge 374
The Consent of Parties 375
Plighting the Troth 380
The Ring 383
The Prayer 386
The Sacred Bond 387
The Bond ratified by the Church 388
The Blessing 389
Psalm cxxviii. 390
Psalm lxvii. 393
The Prayers and Supplications 394
The Lord's Prayer 395

PAGE

THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY (continued):
The Supplications and Responses 399
The Prayer for Spiritual Blessings 401
The Prayer for the Blessing of Children..... 402
The Prayer for Grace to live according to God's laws.. 403
The closing Benediction..... 406
The Exhortation 407

THE ORDER FOR THE VISITATION OF THE SICK.. 413
Salutation..... ib.
The Responses..... 416
The Lord's Prayer ..... ib.
The Responses..... 421
The Collects..... 422
The Exhortation 426
Exhortation for those in Extremity of Sickness 431
The Articles of the Faith 434
The Rubrics..... 436
The Absolution 439
The Prayer of Consolation..... 442
Psalm lxxi. 444
Prayers for Blessing 448
Occasional Prayers 451
A Prayer for a Sick Child..... ib.
A Prayer for a Sick Person, when there appeareth small hope of recovery 456
A Commendatory Prayer for a Sick Person at the point of departure..... 458
A Prayer for Persons troubled in Mind or in Conscience 460

THE COMMUNION OF THE SICK 465

THE ORDER FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD 467
Opening Sentences ..... ib.
Psalm xxxix..... 471

PAGE

THE ORDER FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD (continued):

Psalm xc. 474
The Lesson 476
Devotions at the Grave 488
The Burial 499
Who are the Blessed 501
The Invocations 505
The Lord's Prayer 506
Prayer 515
The Collect 519
The closing Benediction 522

INDEX 529

*** The Reader is requested to bear in mind, that the chief object of this work is not so much to show the authority on which the Services of our Church rest, or to prove the doctrines they enforce—that has been done by other writers. Its aim is rather to point out the beautiful and affecting manner in which those Services appeal to the heart as well as to the understanding.

The Services themselves are not inserted, as the addition of them to the book would have inconveniently increased its size; therefore it would be desirable, in reading the following pages, that the Prayer-Book be referred to for the Service to which the Reflections are directed, lest otherwise they fail to convey the instruction hoped for.

INTRODUCTION.

It cannot but rejoice every faithful member of the Church, that in these days of intellectual advancement, an increasing value seems set upon our incomparable daily Liturgy. Nor is this surprising. As no state of mind is more unsatisfactory or unsafe than doubt, so, where to doubt risks not only some temporal interests—wealth, or power, or fame—but peace to the soul in time and in eternity; doubly welcome is a resting-place both for its fears and its hopes. Such a resting-place for faith the Church supplies. Nor could the wisdom of man frame a service more consonant with the feelings of a devout worshipper, whatever be his condition as to this world, whatever his hopes as to the next. Whether he be rich or poor, learned or unlearned, great or lowly; whether he pour out his soul before the Almighty, humbly as "a miserable sinner," or hopefully as a penitent reconciled through faith; the desire of the heart finds in the liturgy such adequate expression for every varied feeling, that his soul can scarcely fail to gain thereby strength for weakness, comfort for sorrow, *hope for* despair.

With the occasional services of our Church, however, though their excellence is equal, the case is not the same. They are not always prized as they ought to be. Either they are too often overlooked altogether, or being applied to only on the particular occasions to which they severally refer, they are then partially or slightly regarded, their excellencies passed over unheeded, and their value consequently not understood. At the same time, they are so thoroughly practical both in the instruction and the comfort they convey; the sentiments which they proclaim find so ready a response from every considerate mind, in weal or in woe: they teach so forcibly the responsibility of the different members of Christian families to God and their fellow-creatures—from the hoary head of age preparing to meet its God, to the youthful heart looking for safe guidance upon entering a world of trial; that it may haply be no useless work to call more general attention to them: not so much as showing the several particulars in which they harmonize with the word of God, as by incidental notices of that harmony: pointing specially their *practical* bearing, and exhibiting the beautiful manner in which they are adapted to their purpose, of preparing all the families of the earth to become the families of God; directing aright our feelings, and giving the expression of them, when we find ourselves placed in the circumstances, to meet which they are appointed. Indeed upon those special occasions which chequer life, and are more immediately of individual interest, these services come home to us with a truth and force, which, if we give due heed to them, cannot fail to excite at once our veneration and *our gratitude*. How admirably they temper our joy

or sorrow, as the events, which may have led us more immediately to our God, call forth fear or hope, gladness or mourning, they best can tell, who with an earnest desire to do all things as unto God and to his glory, gladly accept aid so ready and so powerful. Moreover, as in the daily service of the Church, so in these her occasional services also, the spirit which pervades them is so heavenly, the language in which they are framed is so scriptural, so beautiful, so clear; that whilst to the unlearned they supply sound instruction and a ready safeguard against error; to them and to the learned alike they offer rich and unfailing consolation, by guiding them to Him, who is "the way, the truth, and the life." To the illustrious in their greatness, and to the unknown in their lowliness, they offer what the world can never give. The aid they supply is proffered as to beings, who "brought nothing into this world, neither may carry anything out;" beings, who are born helpless; and who, in themselves, helpless go out of it. Uninfluenced, therefore, by those merely adventitious circumstances of earthly distinction, which might interpose against truth, the Church boldly appeals at once to the heart; and so truly does she meet every better feeling, every juster fear, every nobler hope, that to the heart, thus freed from worldly entanglements, her appeal cannot be in vain.

In the following pages, however, though my hope is, as my endeavour has been, to render the work generally useful, by offering such reflections, as from lack of time and opportunity, may not have presented themselves to the minds of many who yet are ready to receive aid from the Church of which they profess

themselves members, I have addressed myself most frequently to the Mother: especially when the particular service, as that for "the Churching of Women," applies at once to herself; or when, as in those for Baptism and Confirmation, they concern more specially the younger Christian. Indeed, the reflections upon all the services, even when the observations may not be addressed directly to the Mother, will be found calculated, I trust, to assist her in opening the subject, and explaining it to her children. The Mother's patient love it is, which frames the first lispings of prayer. To her we owe the unwearied diligence with which, line upon line, precept upon precept, were imprinted on our minds the elements of that faith, which is now our life. As years rolled on, and to childhood succeeded youth, the same vigilant care taught us to confirm our Christian vows: till at length, with a heart full of anxiety for our truest welfare, she led us to the table of the Lord; there to seal our profession by the high and solemn ordinance, which the Saviour himself appointed and sanctified. To her therefore, generally, we look for impressing upon her children the value of the other occasional services provided by the Church, to meet those seasons of alternate joy and sorrow, which mark human life; in the encouraging hope, that when those she loves be called to mourn or to rejoice, they may find joy heightened, and sorrow relieved, and both sanctified, by receiving either as from the Lord, and in each seeking his blessing. True it is, that Both parents are equally responsible to God, that their children be brought up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," and so trained for their final home *in heaven*; yet from the active habits of life which

usually demand the time and attention of Fathers, the early bringing up of children, both mind and body, must rest with the Mother. Hence, to the Mother chiefly are the following reflections submitted. Nor can we too highly estimate the value of this her early care. Hers is the important task thus to pre-occupy the ground—thus at once to sow in the heart good seed, lest tares spring up. And we may be well assured that this is no unimportant consideration; for however philosophy may determine as to material nature, the workings of our own minds must convince us, that intellectual nature allows no vacuum. The mind must be employed and occupied in some way; and that way will be evil, if it be not preoccupied with good. The most genial soil, if uncultivated, will bring forth weeds, thorns, and briers. The hard rock is covered with its moss: something must spring from it. Therefore in the mind and heart of her child, the mother, under God's blessing, plants truth, to the exclusion of error. The wisdom of this provident care is self-evident; where faith is fixed, doubt enters not; where the fear of God is strong, the fear of man is powerless; and where the hope of heaven flourishes, despair fades away. Nor is it possible for any one to meditate seriously upon these services, without admiring their beautiful harmony with the Holy Scriptures. There, all the great doctrines of the Gospel stand prominent, not only as they relate to us with regard to eternity, but as they bear upon human life, and the more striking events which characterize it. The fall of man and its consequences; a corrupt nature and its remedy; the soul, lost by sin, by grace renewed; an angry God reconciled by the all prevailing

merits of his Son, our Saviour Christ; the poor made wise, and the learned simple, by the Spirit vouchsafed from heaven to the faithful; unfailing protection to the Church ensured by the promised help of its ever present and gracious Founder; the care of God's Providence, and the shadowing of his grace, as severally our protection in things temporal, our safety in things spiritual—these truths and their consequences are so essential to our attaining the one thing needful, that the services which plainly set them forth for our consideration, and forcibly urge them upon our adoption, must surely claim our especial regard, win upon our affections as they convince our understandings, and be acknowledged as an invaluable gift of the Church, towards aiding her children in working out their own salvation, and keeping the path to heaven.

In explaining the Catechism, care has been taken more fully to elucidate the authority on which its doctrines rest, and their perfect agreement with the Word of God. For we may reasonably trust, that, aided by this admirable summary of their religion, even the *Young*—should they find the nature and grounds of their faith questioned—may "not fall from their stedfastness," but be "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them."

As the Catechism forms a connecting link between the ordinance of Baptism and the rite of Confirmation, it finds its appropriate place in this volume between those services.

THE

CHURCHING OF WOMEN.

CHAPTER I.

Suppose a Mother to open these pages, she will appropriately begin by directing her attention to that service, which more immediately applies to herself in her maternal character; and which the Church has provided as a fit form of "Thanksgiving after Childbirth." The service is so admirably adapted to its purpose, that it may profitably be pondered, not only by those who have experienced recent deliverance from the fear of death, but by those also over whom is impending the danger, to acknowledge the divine mercy in delivering from which, the thanksgiving is appointed. For it is the part of sound wisdom and true courage, to *prepare* for any inevitable trial of our faith and constancy; knowing, as we all do from experience, that the weightier sorrows of life become more oppressive when they fall unexpectedly, and even its lighter trials come with a power not their

own, when aided by surprise [1]. They, therefore, whose trial as a Mother may be approaching, will find this service an excellent preparative, under God's blessing, for so regulating their feelings, that they may await the event with a holy calm, and a sure trust in the love of their heavenly Father: no doubt of his watchful care adding to their pains; no doubt of his sure presence aggravating their peril. The holy communing to which their meditations lead them, will tend to remove apprehension, strengthen faith, and confirm hope; for it will bear them to the mercy-seat of the ever-present and all powerful Jehovah, who, supreme over all, ruleth all things for our final good. What danger can weaken the faith; what afflictions subdue the spirit which relies on such a God!

But perhaps the reader is some happy Mother, even now about to offer up her "thanksgiving for safe deliverance from the great pain and peril of childbirth." Let us then meditate together upon the service provided by the Church for an occasion so joyful.

[1] How true this is, the sin of Peter in denying his Lord is a very instructive proof. The mere fact of being charged by an unarmed female domestic, with being a follower of Christ, would in itself appear a very inadequate cause to produce the effect which followed it. The courage of the Apostle had been tested a few hours previously, and he then, in a most determined spirit had drawn his sword, and risked his life in defence of his Master. Yet that courage quailed, and that spirit sank, when an apparently light trial of his fidelity occurred. Surprise gave it success. He had prepared his mind to meet death. Of contempt, as being to nobler minds worse than death, he had not thought; and throughout, his confidence had been in himself; therefore he fell. So must it ever be with all those who lean to their own understanding, and make not the Lord their stay, and prepare not to meet Him always: whether in life, in death, or in judgment.

The service opens with an address which cannot fail to elevate and cheer the soul; leading the worshipper to give honour where honour is due, for deliverance from her late dangers; and in memory of the past, stilling every rising fear, and allaying every troublous apprehension for the future. Deliverance has been vouchsafed of the mercy of the Lord! And is not his mercy infinite? Your heart overflows with a gladness which bursts forth in grateful praise and thanksgiving. Buoyant with joy at this escape from extremity of peril, your soul longeth to enter the courts of the Lord, and there show forth all his praise, who hath done so great things for you. It is a welcome relief to your overflowing feelings of gratitude to give expression to them. Faith, thus cheered by the merciful goodness of God, instantly gains accession of strength for the fulfilment of your new duties. You, as a Mother, feel this truth. As you clasp the smiling infant to your breast, and remember how evidently it was of God's goodness that you were delivered from the great pain and peril of its birth, you prepare to fulfil all the consequent maternal duties, meet all the anxieties which must attend its future years, watch its welfare, soul and body, unweariedly, firmly, cheerfully; for the same God you know is at hand, to be with you still. He who has been graciously pleased to deliver you and your child from the first danger, is at hand to guard you both through future peril. Cease not then to draw nigh to Him; He will then never be far from thee: and to feel the continued presence of a good and merciful God, is to feel that you have alway with you a very present help in the needful time of trouble. Happy the Mother, who, blessed in the birth of her

child, sanctifieth the blessing by receiving it as at the hand of a good God! Thine is no half gratitude. Thy whole soul is thankful. There is no hiding the feeling within the heart! You are anxious to show forth the praise of your God in the great congregation. And here the Church proffers her ready aid. In order that the praises offered may, as we humbly trust, be acceptable before the throne of grace, she directs your part of the service to begin with "Psalms of Thanksgiving"—words of holy inspiration; and most aptly chosen, indicative as they are of that reverence with which, even in our gladness, we should approach the Lord our Maker: thus remembering the apostolical injunction to those whose hearts are filled with joy[2].

Of the two Psalms appointed for this service, each, whilst it supplies the fit language of pious praise, is highly monitory. The one displays very beautifully the feelings of a heart glowing with a vivid recollection of mercies, whilst it impresses most powerfully the necessity of proving by a holy obedience, a grateful sense of the source whence those mercies flowed. The other, by avowing that as all blessings, so the special blessing now vouchsafed is the free gift of a gracious God, leads the mind to a humble but happy dependence upon the giver, to bless the gift. As in the first, there is mingled with the language of thanksgiving the language of a holy obedience, and the soul is animated to exertion on the noble principle of gratitude—"What reward shall I give unto the Lord?"—so in the second, being reminded that children are to be received as the gift of God, you are led to feel,

[2] James v. 13.

in its full weight, the responsibility which lies upon you rightly to use the gift. You feel your obligation so to train your dear infant in the fear and love of God, that when all the families of the earth shall finally be gathered together for judgment, you may find that none of those loved ones whom God hath given to your nurture here, lose their inheritance hereafter, but rejoice with you and others, the saints in light, when you present them before the throne, as "the children which God hath given you [2]."

[2] Isaiah viii. 18. "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." We learn from St. Paul's application of this passage, Heb. viii. 18. that it is to be understood as the triumphant language of the Messiah, who, having conquered sin and death, presented himself before the throne of his Father, justly claiming, for the reward of victory, the souls whom He had redeemed. He is pictured as arraying his faithful in the presence of their reconciled Father. He declares them dear to Him as children, beings of a like nature and of like privileges, and inheritors of his kingdom—"Behold I and the children which God hath given me." Did the hope of these fruits of victory cheer *Him* during the toils of his warfare—when, having trodden the winepress alone, He returned with dyed garments from Bozrah?—So you may, surely, with a humble yet hopeful mind, cheer yourself under the difficulties and anxious watchfulness for the souls of your children entrusted to your care. You may joyfully look to that blessed hour, when you also, in rendering up your account, present, safe through faith in Christ Jesus, the souls committed to your charge. What a motive for perseverance now in your maternal duties, is the glorious prospect of this maternal reward then. O! may He, whose grace is here strength to thee, and wisdom, and comfort, hereafter receive to Himself thee and thine, and welcome both thyself and thy children as his own!

CHAPTER II.

PSALM CXVI.

THE very opening of this Psalm is in the spirit of a noble faith. "I am well pleased: that the Lord, hath heard the voice of my prayer; that he hath inclined his ear unto me: therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." Your safety is, doubtless, felt to be an answer to prayer. How salutary this feeling! The Mother, who is thus convinced that the Almighty is always present to hear and answer prayer, must surely reap the benefit of this conviction; not only in a firmer reliance on the Divine goodness, but in an added watchfulness, lest the duty of prayer be neglected, and He who answereth prayer be forgotten. Or shall He hearken, and we cease our supplications? Shall He graciously *incline* his ear—what an affecting indication of his fatherly love, and anxious care that we should ask, because He is *then* ready to give!—shall *He* incline his ear, and our tongues keep silence? How gloriously does faith strengthen under this view of the Divine favour! What, though as you hang over your helpless smiling infant, there sometimes arises, in long train, the prospect of anxious watchings, unceasing care, sorrow, and sickness, and other adversity to which flesh is heir, and of which he may in after life have his share—you are not cast down in spirit. Faith interposes. You believe in a God who heareth and answereth prayer—you believe in a God who delighteth to be inquired of by his servants, when *difficulties perplex* and trials threaten them—you be-

lieve in an ever present God, who often sends trouble that we may the more earnestly seek Him in our distress, and receive the promise made to the prayerful soul; "Call upon me in the time of trouble; I *will* deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."—You further believe in a God who ordereth all things well, with reference to our highest, our eternal advantage, though perhaps He bringeth the promised deliverance by a way of which we thought not; even by a way which the eagle's eye hath not seen, nor the wit of man descried. Well pleased that the Lord hath thus heard your voice, you wisely resolve with St. Paul, to pray alway. "Because my recovery is of God's undeserved mercy; because I owe to him my life; because He heard and answered my supplications; therefore it shall not satisfy my soul to praise Him only for recent blessing, and afterwards neglect his holy name, or be indifferent to the honour due unto it. As long as I live will I call upon Him; yea, as long as I have any being, I will sing praises unto my God."

One may well indeed imagine the overflowing gratitude of your heart, as you pour forth its inmost thoughts, and delight to acknowledge the Lord as your God. "Behold me, whom lately the sorrows of death compassed, now walking before the Lord in the land of the living. Behold! not only is renewed life given to me, but still dearer ties to life have been vouchsafed. Share with me my joy, that a child is born to me. O my God! I thank Thee! I thank Thee that I now live. The grave might, ere this, have been my resting place, and sorrow and mourning might have shadowed these hours of gladness. Whereas new life and health are the portion of child and mother. When

in anguish of soul and with a troubled spirit I cried unto Thee, Thou didst relieve my distress; Thou didst hear my prayer; Thou didst recompense me of thy grace and mercy. Return then unto thy rest, O my soul. Bless the Lord who hath rewarded thee [1]. Snatched from peril, let me live in my season of safety, as in that hour of peril I *vowed* to live—let me live to God! Let me live not for time, but *for eternity*. Besides, if ever holiness were my highest duty, and my highest interest, specially is it so now. *Now*, another immortal soul, even this my precious infant, is given to my charge. And vain will be my devoted love for this dear one—vain my care for its temporal comforts, unless I provide, by God's help, for its spiritual and eternal welfare: vain my anxiety for its well doing on earth, unless I train it for happiness in heaven. O what added motive have I here, for a truly religious life on my own part; that my example may not be wanting to enforce my precepts! And can I doubt that the God who hath given me this treasure, will also give me in answer to prayer, grace to apply it to his glory? Surely I will call upon that God as long as I live [2]."

[1] Psalm cxvi. 7. In this and many other passages of Holy Writ, the word "reward," implies no meritorious return, but a gracious answer of mercy from a God of love and compassion.

[2] The learned and venerable Bishop Hall * has left on record very striking and encouraging testimony to the value of this maternal care. With vast and varied learning, with deep and unaffected piety, with perfect love and charity toward all men, he yet experienced great and heavy afflictions. Many a time and oft under these circumstances, when the darkest trials clouded his old age, did

* Bishop Hall was born in 1574; and died in 1656.

With reflections like these, your heart will warm; and as the spark of gratitude kindles into a flame of holy joy and heavenly confidence, you will go on your way, a happy mother, in the strength of the Lord.

Thus solemnly you have pledged yourself to a holy life — "*walking before the Lord.*" The expression beautifully pictures a Christian course. Is *his* eye ever over you? does that eye never slumber, never sleep? What circumspection you exercise to avoid all things which you know would offend Him! What fearlessness do you feel of those evils, which his preventing providence and grace will either ward off, or remove! To Him are all hearts open? You allow no thought to enter there of which you would fear his

he bless the memory of his mother, who had trained him in his heavenly-mindedness during infancy and youth. Speaking of her excellences and his undiminished debt of gratitude to her, he thus in his old age expressed his admiration of her character, both as a teacher and a pattern.—"Never any lips have read to me such feeling lectures of piety: neither have I known any soul, that more accurately practised them, than her own. How often have I blessed the memory of those divine passages of experimental divinity, which I have heard from her mouth."—And he adds, with a depth of feeling and touching tenderness worthy the son of such a mother,—"I can hardly take off my pen from so exemplary a subject: her life and death were saintlike."

Thus this patient Christian sufferer, when aged and desolate and in prison, appears to have felt, in its fullest extent, the sure blessing of those early lessons of piety which a tender mother had instilled into him. Say, was she not blessed in her deed? Who knoweth, then, but that thus in after years, if the prospect which now, perhaps, seems all bright before your child, be overcast with cares and sorrows, and amid the changes and chances of life his days may set in darkness,—it may be with *you* and *your child* as with this pious son and his saint-like teacher!—the son sustained in his affliction by the faith first instilled into him by his mother!

judgment. Are no secrets hid from Him? how peacefully do you repose in a happy consciousness of having no cherished sin to conceal from Him, and in a firm conviction that not one lowly humbling thought of your heart is passed over unnoticed by Him; but that the inmost whisperings of contrition under a sense of infirmity, the most secret confessions of lowliness, under a sense of unworthiness—*all* are known to Him, and from Him shall not lose their reward. But to keep such a course of life in a world of trial like this; to hold a course undeviating from the straight and narrow way which leadeth to heaven; a course of wisdom, courage, and patience; to hold it, with unswerving rectitude before man, and unsullied purity before God—all this is so far beyond man's strength; so opposed to the conflicting interests of the world, and to the natural bias of the heart; that the wisest and the best have ever found the task too arduous for their own unassisted powers to execute. So is it with yourself. In the fulness of your gratitude, you made the vow. In the calm season of your joy you would fain pay that vow. Remember, therefore, *now* the source whence *then* you looked for strength to fulfil your resolutions, and bring the same to good effect—even Jesus, the Crucified! Faith in *Him* was then all your trust, all your hope. Be it so now. *Then* your resolve was worthy of you—"I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vow, now in the presence of all God's people; in the courts of the Lord's house, even in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem!" O *now*, remember this; and as often as the cup of blessing, the cup of the Lord, with all the means of grace, afforded by the Holy Com-

munion of the body and blood of Christ, is proffered to you, turn not away. Never turn away from the table of the Lord, when it is prepared with the bread of life, of which they who eat, hunger no more; and with the water of life, of which they who drink, thirst no more. Your attendance at that holy feast is an evidence to your fellow-christians of your gratitude and love to Christ your Saviour; for you are seen keeping Christ's commandments because you love him[s]." It is a clear manifestation that you are not ashamed of Him, the crucified Saviour, who is your life and your hope. It is an avowal worthy of you, not only that without the Spirit of grace you can do no good thing; but that, in proportion to your sense of religious obligation and holy resolutions, should be your earnest prayer for strength from above to fulfil that obligation, and bring to good effect those resolutions. It is a convincing proof that you view those holy mysteries, the tokens of your Redeemer's love, both as the means whereby we receive God's grace, and a pledge to assure us thereof. Fail not then the duty. Holy resolve, and holy prayer, and holy obedience must go hand in hand; and upon them, for Christ's sake, who shall doubt God's blessing? Nor is it only that your own faith is strengthened, and your own hope brightened by such unreserved and public demonstration of your gratitude. Other hearts catch the flame: other spirits are warmed by your fervour, and animated by your example; and glowing with a holier love to the God who hath done so great things for *you*, are animated by no vain hope that if they

[s] "*If* ye *love* me, *keep* my *commandments*." John xiv. 16.

likewise trust as you have done, they, like you, may be comforted. They feel that the same God is their God, ready to hear and answer them also in their troubles, whether of mind, body, or estate. They also will be encouraged to receive the cup of salvation; they too will call upon the name of the Lord; they likewise will gladly seek, in the same ordinance, that spiritual strength and heavenly comfort which none, who so seek, seek in vain.

Defer not thus to seek strength for the fulfilment of your vow; but take the first opportunity which may present itself, for partaking of the Holy Communion [4]. Show yourself amongst the people, as gladly engaged in your Saviour's service. Let them see, that as you acknowledge your recent safety to be of his mercy, so you confess your future life must be of his grace; and that it were vain to expect the aid of that grace, if you turned away from those means of gaining it, which He himself, as the last bequest to his Church, did so solemnly and so graciously ordain [5]. You rejoice in the child vouchsafed to you of God. It is well! Rejoice heartily; but rejoice gratefully. Forget not the Giver in the gift.

[4] The Church, with her usual provident care for the right ordering of our life, as members of Christ, and children of God; whose spiritual life must, if sustained at all, be sustained by spiritual food; has added to the service a direction to this effect, enjoining "the woman, who cometh to give thanks," that "if there be a communion, it is convenient that she receive the Holy Communion."

[5] See the reflections upon this blessed ordinance, in the subsequent pages "upon the Holy Communion."

CHAPTER III.

PSALM CXXVII.

THIS Psalm also is admirably adapted to cherish happy feelings and right views upon the occasion for which it is selected. The Psalmist first reminds us that our safety and support and very existence, are the gift of God [1]. But whilst he warns us against self-confidence, either in attaining or preserving any of our blessings, and leads us to receive them as from God, he speaks to the humble soul the language of courage and consolation.

What, if it be true, that "except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain?" What, if all our trust and all our hope must be in *Him?* Equally true is it, that if the Lord doth keep the city, *then* the watchman waketh *not* in *vain*. If by earnest prayer and holy desires after God we gain his gracious aid, *then* will honest industry in providing things necessary for the body, and sincere endeavours in strengthening our souls for the duties of spiritual life, not fail their object. The mind and the heart, the understanding and the affections, being kept against fear of evil by the Spirit of an ever present God, who himself watcheth with a love that never slumbereth, never sleepeth—the soul thus kept by God's care—we are encouraged in our own watchfulness: we shall not watch in vain; but be enabled to

[1] "In Him"—as St. Paul, in his usual strong mode, expresses this truth—"in Him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts xvii. 28.

exhibit so uniform a faith in God, equally as a God of providence and a God of grace, that the end thereof shall be peace.

Such a view of the divine care is a source of continual peace and comfort. When the number of children increase, of course there follows the necessity for added diligence in parents to provide for them. But worldly means do not always increase in proportion to the increase in the number of the family: in that case temporal comforts will be diminished; much self-denial be required; much added labour undertaken [2]. Yet parents gather fresh strength for added anxieties, and cheerfully take such measures as their state of life presents to them for increasing their means, *because* they trust for a blessing upon their labour to the goodness of the Lord: and all the self-denying which they exercise for their children's sake, being done "as unto the Lord," cannot lose its reward. The honest heart finds that reward in an approving conscience, and in a deep conviction that there *is* an eye which seeth, and a Being present who knoweth motive as well as act: the God whose mercy is over all his works; whose providence is over the bird of

[2] Kings might envy the lowliest of their subjects, who, living by faith, thus view all the dispensations of providence as ordered right. See the parents of a poor family, toiling daily and cheerfully, honestly and perseveringly, that they may provide for the children God has sent them. As they set at their frugal board, see them portioning to those around them, liberally; to themselves, sparingly. Indeed, if there be a sight calculated to excite sympathy and admiration, and to prove how sure and blessed is the consolation which religion can supply to the careworn heart, it is that of Christian parents in their poverty, smiling with their smiling children, trusting patiently to divine blessing upon their honest industry, and looking *forward to their* final home, as the family of God in heaven.

the air and the flower of the field; and whose care for man is as much higher than his care for them, as an immortal soul exceeds in worth the grass we tread upon. The encouraging question of our gracious Redeemer fills such a heart with serenity—"Shall he not much more clothe you?" Nor were ever known parents who would spare one of their children. So expansive is parental love, that whether its objects be few or many, the same affection is ready for each. Nay, does not the addition of each new-born child in a family increase their mutual affection? Does not the fresh link add fresh strength to the band of love which unites them? If sympathy avail generally between man and man in soothing the heart under affliction, what must be its power between parents and children, brothers and sisters—their fears and their hopes, their sorrows and their joys, all identified?

Thus not only is the strength of parental feeling enlisted on behalf of the dear helpless one, giving it welcome amid worldly discomfort perhaps, and even poverty; not only is there cheerful watching by night and toiling by day to secure such comforts as infancy requires—Faith comes in aid of feeling. "Children are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord." This thought brightens the darkest earthly prospect. God will not forsake his own. Believing this; believing also that the divine power and the divine love are both infinite, ruling all things for man's final good; parents are encouraged to apply themselves the more diligently to their worldly calling, from the trust they have, that, if uniting their own industry with a proper reliance upon the divine blessing for success, they "cast all their care upon God," He will "care

for them." Even suppose afflictions and perplexities so increase, that there seems no escape from them, still you may *at the last* find reason with St. Paul even to glory in them. The trials to which God has thus called you, may have been necessary for your soul, to discipline it for heaven. But for the exercise of grace which it called forth, pride might have filled the heart where now humility reigns; love of this world might have risen above the love of God; there might have been distrust, and fear, and selfishness, where now abound faith, and hope, and charity; and an overweening regard for things of earth, might have taken place of that ardent longing for the holy peace of heaven, which is now your abiding repose and joy. Thus your very difficulties become blessings to the soul: and you find that all things *work together* for *good* to them who love and fear their God.

Nor are the blessings of such a faith confined to Parents. Children learn to walk in the light of so bright an example. When they, from their early years, see the noble spirit of courage and endurance which true religion gives their parents; when they see it raise the father's arm to added exertion for their support, and animate the tender mother in patient and uncomplaining endurance of ills, for their sake, they almost insensibly imbibe the same spirit, learn the power of Christian principles in giving the fruit of Christian happiness; and grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. A family thus united by the bonds of religious love, and acting together upon the principle of religious duty, aid each other by their very numbers. They strengthen each *other in* every good resolution; and by bearing one

another's burdens, temporal and spiritual, help each other onward toward their final home in heaven. They animate each other by the aged Prophet's assurance, when recording the result of his own experience through a long and varied life, he declares; "I have been young, and now am old, yet never saw I the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging their bread[3]." Such is the triumph of faith; and to such a triumph the Church would in this service lead the Christian Mother, under the added weight of care which an increasing family must bring; and in bearing which the best strength is to be found in a holy reliance upon her God.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

YET every Christian Mother humbly acknowledges that the goodness of God thus vouchsafed is *undeserved*. "It is of the Lord's mercy." Therefore, in remembering mercies past, and proceeding to implore a continuance of them for the time to come, you begin your supplication with the Lord's Prayer, as a peculiarly appropriate channel for the expression of mingled feelings of love and duty, dependence and trust: the minister and congregation first joining in a pious ejaculation, indicative of the most lowly sense of man's unworthiness, and his entire dependence upon the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[3] Psalm xxxvii. 25.

As a Mother, grateful for recent deliverance from your peril, you feel that the introduction of the Lord's Prayer at this part of the service, is most seasonable. It does indeed mark the soundest judgment and discretion in the framers of our Liturgy. We each of us know from our own experience, not only that our prayers, like all our services are, and ever must be, stamped with imperfection and unworthiness, but that very often in proportion to the fulness of our feelings —whether of fear or hope, apprehension or safety, sorrow or joy—so is our difficulty in giving due expression to them. Lest this be your case; lest you also should either want words to express the overflowing joy of your heart, or haply fail in fit expression of reverence and love, of gratitude for the past and faith for the future, you offer a prayer in itself perfect: a prayer, which for his sake who framed it for you, and taught it you, we must trust will be acceptable in *his* sight, to whom it is offered, and to whose honour and glory you gratefully, and with peculiar solemnity now dedicate yourself.

Observe several petitions of it, as they bear your thanksgivings or your supplications to the throne of grace—for new hopes and new fears are quickened in your heart, as a mother praying not for herself only, but for her child—observe how closely they come home to your heart, meet the feelings of gratitude which at this time must glow there with unwonted ardour, and aid you so to fix your whole soul upon the gracious Being whom you are addressing, that whilst in your maternal character you acknowledge your added responsibility, you find also added support as "a Mother saved."

God is our "Father in heaven." What a thought for fallen man! how instructive and comforting to all! to *you*, how monitory and encouraging! It instructs as to your new duties, and points the comfort of a due fulfilment of them; it warns against presumption, encourages holiness, and leads to peace. Is this kind and gracious Being your Father? To Him you look, and on Him you rely to sustain, guide, and bless this fresh object of your love and care. As you watch your helpless charge, and ponder what its future years may be, and remember that when once launched on the waves of this troublesome world, it must share the storm and the tempest, as well as the calm and sunshine of life; all a Mother's love fills your soul with prayer to the great Being who ruleth the storm, that *He* would keep your loved one under the shadow of his wing, and exercising his power to perfect his love, be himself the ever-present guardian of your child from the cradle to the grave. Yet amid the thousand apprehensions which fill your mind after such ponderings, faith triumphs; and in pouring out your heart's dearest hopes before the throne of heaven, and addressing Him who sitteth thereon, as your *Father*, thus your mind communes with itself—"O! why should I fear? God is our Father: and I know full well what is a parent's love. He hath already saved *me* in my peril, when my soul was nigh unto death; and He hath preserved my helpless *infant* to be its parent's joy. Thus far He has brought us safely through all dangers: it were coward faithlessness to doubt his protection now. O my child, unconscious as *thou* art of his gracious care, *I* well know that He is thy protector! As the Father of all, He careth

for all. I cannot look around me, without perceiving what evidences of this love and care abound. The bird of the air, the flower of the field, the very grass under my feet, owe their existence and support to Him. Joy to my heart it is to believe that this care is extended to thee! And faith is, I trust, now sanctified in me by grace through Christ Jesus. My earnest prayer for thee, dear infant, and for myself, is, that as opening sense admits instruction, I may teach thee to understand thy debt of gratitude to the unseen but gracious providence of that heavenly Father, which sustaineth thee. With growth in stature may there be growth in wisdom and in grace! Then, though death must at last remove me, I shall fear no evil for thee, even from the troublous world in which I leave thee. God—the omniscient, the omnipotent, the all-merciful—is at hand to sustain thee with all a Father's care; all a Mother's love."

When, as you proceed in this service, you pray that God's "name be hallowed"—in how enlarged a sense do you apply the petition! Not with holy reverence only, but with the deepest gratitude do you now hallow that name; for He, who in the glory of his majesty bears it, the Lord of heaven and earth, is yet your Father. What though, as the ineffable "I AM," God cannot be approached unto[4]! what though He be past finding out, eternal, invisible! He is always present: to Him all hearts are open, from Him no secrets are hid. He knew your affliction, and He answered your cry in the hour of trial; He knows your gratitude, and He accepts your thanksgivings in the hour of joy. Therefore you hallow his great name,

[4] Exodus iii. 14.

as your heavenly *Father* who heard your cry and did help you; as your gracious Redeemer through whom you found access to the Father; as your sure Comforter who spake peace to your soul, and bade your fears be still. Thus yourself hallowing the name of God, you take advantage of this undisturbed quiet and retirement from the world, to meditate with a quickened feeling of anxiety, how you may, in due season, best teach your child also to hallow the same glorious name—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the Christians' God—the Christians' friend[b]. And this is done, not only by abstaining from every irreverent, careless use of the Word; "taking it in vain," and using it in ordinary conversation; but by so remembering *his* presence whose name is invoked, that honour towards Him be in the heart, and on the lips, and in the conduct, as in the presence of the King of kings—the Lord whose name is Holy.

Where the *name* of God is thus hallowed, there is a natural desire that his *authority*, in its full power and majesty, should be established. You, therefore, pray that "his kingdom may come"—the kingdom, here, of holiness and peace; hereafter, of glory and of bliss. But never did you breathe this petition so fervently; never did the aspirations of your soul rise so eagerly in hopeful supplication for its accomplishment, as now. You look upon your infant, helpless, and unconscious yet, but still to become, as you trust,

[b] Exodus xxxiii. 11. "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." John xv 15. "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

a faithful subject of God's spiritual kingdom here, and a happy sharer of his heavenly kingdom hereafter. What fresh ardour does this thought give to your devotion! your petition includes a prayer for one who cannot pray; but whose welfare, in time and in eternity, is still more dear to you than your own. With what added earnestness is it now offered! As often as you clasp your infant to your breast, rejoicing as a happy mother in the possession of her new treasure, your heart swells with a mingled feeling of anxiety and hope, that the soul thus entrusted to your care may not fail its share of that kingdom, for whose coming you pray. What affectionate ponderings fill your maternal heart! Perhaps as you stand over its sleeping couch, and catch some radiant smile passing over the gentle cheek, how would you fain fix that smile, that no care ever cloud it! Since, however, a state so blissful is not for this world, and some sorrow must darken the path of life; yours is the wise resolve, that no effort shall be wanting on your part, to secure for your child the surer happiness of heaven —rest, joy, glory, which will never change. With this object in view, you will perseveringly lead your loved one so to live in obedience to the laws of God's spiritual kingdom of holiness that it lose not its inheritance in his eternal kingdom of glory. Thus you meditate! Thus you resolve! Act in accordance to that resolve, and let your holy meditations lead to a holy activity. You can give no better proof of your own sincerity in praying that the kingdom of God may come, than by training your child to a faithful obedience as a subject of that kingdom, and to a love of *his* laws who ruleth therein.

CHAPTER V.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

HAVING prayed that God's "kingdom may come," you proceed to pray that "his will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." On this point your new maternal duties themselves instruct you. Do you assert parental authority as the ground upon which you exact obedience from your child? do you appeal to him by the honoured name of mother, that he obey you? do you plead your nights of wakeful anxiety, when bending over his couch in health and sickness you have so often strained your wearied eye to wakefulness lest yourself should sleep and he awake to require your care? do you plead your devoted love towards him in your oft self-denial for his sake? do you plead your secret prayers for his present and future good? do you thus appeal? do you thus plead?—you do well. You may thus haply bend even the sturdy mind to do your will; whilst upon nobler and more generous spirits their effect will be decisive: for it is a hard heart that can resist a *mother's* appeal, and an ungenerous spirit indeed which yields not to a *mother's* plea. May God, in his mercy, bless you in applying these motives to duty! But in thus training your child, are you not instructing yourself? You pray of God, that you may do his will on earth, as angels do it in heaven! And are there never struggles in your own breast, whether you shall really do his will, or gratify your own in opposition to it? Yet remember He is your Father! Are you not addressing him as such

in this very petition? and has *He* no appeal to make on the score of authority? Is He not your Creator? Has He no plea to put in on the ground of love and affection? Had He no watchful care over you, when there was none else to help you? Nay, does He not himself assure you, that you shall sooner "forget your sucking child[1]" than He forget you? Your entire dependence upon Him for the past—your sole *sure* reliance on Him for the future, on behalf of your loved child, as of yourself—your solemn vow of dedication, made in the congregation and registered in heaven—your late deliverance, altogether ascribed to *Him*—all these considerations form a claim upon your obedience as a child of God, which you never perhaps felt to be so powerful as now—when you are called upon to demand of your child, that *your* will be done by him.

In offering the next petition—"Give us this day our daily bread"—you feel that you have now another to care for, another to think for, besides yourself. Perhaps so favoured may be your lot in life; plenty and worldly ease surrounding you without an effort or a care on your own part; that you hardly understand the necessity of earnest supplication for a supply, of which you never knew the want. You have offered the prayer rather as an acknowledgment of dependence than as an expression of want or fear of change. Or it may be otherwise. You may be of those to whom added numbers in the family cause added toil for the present and added care for the future; and even in your joy you may look with tearful eye upon your dear

[1] Isaiah xlix. 15.

infant, lest his need lack supply. But be not discouraged. Still offer up, with more earnest faith, this prayer for "daily bread." Remember that the richest and the greatest, the wealthiest and the most powerful, are sustained amid their daily comforts only by the daily providence of the same God, to whom you pray and in whom you trust. Comfort yourself by the assurance so frequently and so strongly brought before us by our Blessed Saviour, that the good providence of your heavenly Father is *ever* over you; regulating the minutest circumstances which can affect the welfare of yourself and of your family. The assurance is explicit, and illustrated by the simplest images. "Behold the fowls of the air! your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" "Yes," your heart whispers—"Yes, my child; we *are* better than they: and the Being who has made us heirs of immortality by grace will not fail to sustain us by his providence. To doubt his love now, would be senseless ingratitude. O Father! bless my child, and bless its parents' industry as they toil for its support. Give us day by day the "food convenient for us[1]."—You too, a nursing mother, have but to meditate on the nourishment you are yourself made the happy channel of conveying to your nursling, to trust in the same power to sustain your child even unto the end.

Proceeding in your supplications, you pray of your heavenly Father to "forgive you your trespasses as you forgive them that trespass against you." And too sure it is, that however kind and friendly may be our disposition; however careful we be to live peaceably

[1] *Proverbs* xxx. 8.

with all men, neither offending nor offended; however studious to seek peace and ensue it; there exists not the human being who has not something to forgive, as well as much to be forgiven. Happy for us, when we are as ready to extend forgiveness to others, as to ask it for ourselves! Men offend us by injustice, by unkindness, by harsh judgment, by the bitter word, and uncharitable thought—we offend God by sins, negligences, ignorances, infirmities, imperfection in duty; in various ways coming short of what He requires of us. How can we withhold forgiveness from others, when upon *that* forgiveness we have in our prayer made to depend, God's forgiveness of ourselves?

Now the heart, as our own experience tells us, is specially prone to forgive, and more ready to expand with kindness when it is itself at ease, and is rendered joyous by any new or unlooked-for blessing. On good minds at least such is the natural effect of joy: our own happiness is as a light, diffusing itself brightly over every scene—giving to the barren rock, as it were, beauty, and making the forest smile; reaching every heart with whom we hold converse; softening the asperities of the harsh, and calling forth by sympathy every kindly feeling, however latent. Indeed, where minds are of the right stamp, and act upon a truly Christian principle, the feelings of joy and good will are found to reciprocate. A generous spirit, when happy, wishes others to participate its joy: even in its happiness not enduring to be selfish. Still less can it admit a shade of enmity to cloud the bright season of happiness. Yet who happier than you, now, the happy Mother! As you remember your *own recent* preservation, and rejoice in your loved

infant's smiles, you feel as though it were ungrateful to the Giver of your blessings, to allow any lower passion, either of anger, or of fear; or any over anxious care for the world, to dim the brightness of your joy, or interfere with the pure and holy peace which now fills your heart. Where, however, would be that joy, and where that peace, if you had not the pardon of God, as a sinful erring creature? But ere you gain pardon from God, others must gain pardon from you. Hence you are eager to forgive, and *that* from your very heart. Love for your child makes you even to rejoice in your duty.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

PERHAPS you think the next petition hardly applicable to you under your present holy and peaceful frame of mind. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." In the quiet of your chamber, withdrawn for a season from the world, from its busy cares and vain pleasures, it would almost seem as if you were withdrawn also from the power of temptation. But to say nothing of the evil of our own heart and will; our own tempers and their infirmities; remember that you must again return to the duties of the world, and meet again the various difficulties which attend a fulfilment of them. Our divine Teacher's memorable warning is for every occasion and for every situation in which we may be placed; "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation"—a prayerful watchfulness

being the best means we can adopt to lessen the force of impending evil. Beware therefore that you be not like Peter—firm in faith only when you are drawing nigh to your Saviour; and coward-hearted to deny him, when pointed at as "of Galilee." Is not your recent recovery rather a special occasion, whereon to offer, even with added earnestness, the petition in question—lest, thrown off your guard, you forget Him, who, whether in the calm hour of retirement or the busy turmoil of the world, is alike your only, but your certain strength? Besides, as every varied event in human life may be turned to our evil or our good, as it withdraws us from our duties or binds us closer to them—so it were well to take heed of the very happiness which you are enjoying. Let it not so absorb you, as that you pass over unacknowledged other blessings and comforts with which your heavenly Father may have surrounded you. Even with respect to this new and dearest object of your love, be cautious that as the child grows up, and becomes sensible to control and guidance, you be not tempted, for the sake of avoiding pain to yourself, to neglect correcting its faults, shaming its caprices, regulating its temper, subduing its will; or forego any other such high duties as will devolve upon you in training up an immortal soul, not for earth, but heaven. In the affection of a parent, forget not the paramount duty of a guide. And since none are strong, spiritually, in their own strength, or wise in their own wisdom, prayer is here your only sure stay. "O Father, lead me not into temptation; spare me the trials even which my affection for my child may bring; let never my maternal love to this thy precious gift make me

remiss in my filial duty to Thee, my heavenly Father! nor let care for its worldly good lead me to neglect its everlasting welfare, or forget that it is a soul committed to my care; but enable me to train it for thy service—in holiness here, in glory hereafter. Deliver me, by thy grace, as from all temptation and all evils, so more especially from those which may now await me. I return again to the world in *thy* strength! O grant me *thy* salvation!"

Yourself a parent, and feeling all the power of parental love, strong is your faith and bright your hope, in offering this prayer to a heavenly Father. Perfect love therefore casteth out fear. You know in whom you believe. You know your heavenly Father to be the omnipotent God -ruling in heaven, ruling in earth—the Lord, who reigneth over all: "Thine O Father, *is* the kingdom." You know He can both reward and punish as He will; "Thine, O Father, *is* the power." You know He deigns to find his glory[1] in the holiness of his creatures here, and in their happiness hereafter—"Thine, O Father, is the glory." And who shall rightly estimate our high privilege as Sons of God[2]? Humbly indeed, but O how hopefully do we look forward to the hour, when we may become heirs of his heavenly kingdom; repose under the shadow of his power; and share even his unspeakable glory: for honour, and glory, and immortality await the faithful—things so glorious, that "eye

[1] Matt. v. 16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

[2] 1 John iii. 2. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

hath never seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the good things which God hath prepared for them who truly love Him[s]!"

Thou then, the nursing Mother, who, happier than thou knowest, dost clasp thy child to thee, and breathing this prayer for blessing upon this thy second self also, dost humbly supplicate, that together you may have the protection and guidance of a heavenly Father here, and together share the glories of his kingdom hereafter; with what earnest care, though with much pain to yourself often, will you henceforth check whatever evil the waywardness of childhood may threaten; and strive, and toil, and pray, that at the close of life, the nursling which now with its smiles rewards your watchful care during its infant years, may one day, before assembled worlds, rejoice to meet you, at the gathering of the nations; and as the "Well done good and faithful" shall welcome it to heaven, rise up and call thee blessed! When you picture to yourself this consummation of your happiness — the joy of living for ever and ever in the glorious bliss of heaven, with your children and all others now near and dear to you; never again to part; never again to know pain, or trouble, or care, or fear of change; your mutual love sanctified; each one emulous only to serve and praise God with purer and livelier praise; angels your companions, and the spirits of the just made perfect, your fellow-servants: and all this through a long eternity;— when your heart fills with these thoughts, and your eye catches the infant's smile—do you not with your

[s] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

whole soul respond in the solemn Amen? Even so, Father! So let it be to me and mine; for thy love and mercy's sake!

CHAPTER VII.

THE hopeful supplication which the minister, immediately after the Lord's Prayer, offers up for you, that as the Lord's servant, who hast vowed thy vow unto Him, and pledged to Him thy fidelity, thou mayest be saved in time to come by the gracious exercise of the same power which has so lately preserved you in your fearful peril—*that* supplication is offered up in the sincerity of *faith*. You yourself, at once casting off every notion of merit, even in your holy services of prayer, and penitence, and praise; and not relying even upon your own high and holy resolve; state the ground of this hope to be *faith*. You catch the spirit of the words uttered by your minister, and with the congregation declare your trust to be in the most High. "O Lord! save this woman thy servant"—is the heartfelt prayer of the Church offered by the minister on your behalf. The instant response of yourself and the congregation is an unreserved confession of faith—"Who putteth her trust in *Thee*."

The next supplication and its response are also equally Scriptural in doctrine, sentiment, and language. In the remembrance of past deliverances, or under a sense of our liability to future dangers, we acknowledge that "our help cometh of the Lord." In David's figurative, but expressive terms, God is "a strong tower of defence against all our enemies"—our "strong rock and our castle." The Church therefore adopts on

your behalf this hopeful language of the Psalmist, and leads you to look for comfort from it. "Be Thou to her a strong tower," "from the face of her enemy." Now, here the supplication seems directed against evils of a general kind, but your response very appropriately and wisely points its application to a particular danger: even to the attacks of that arch-foe alike of God and man, who was woman's first enemy; whose subtlety, by drawing her from obedience, brought sin into the world and death; and as a prelude to death, brought all those numerous ills of mind, body, or estate, which often in this world of trouble would make life a living death, were it not for the certain hope of a glorious immortality. It was his subtlety which by luring our first parents from their innocence, subjected the mother to those very "pains and perils of childbirth," deliverance from which leads you to offer the present service of praise and thanksgiving. You acknowledge your deliverance from this danger to be of God, who thus "doth not make your foe to triumph over you." He has been your "tower of strength" hitherto; your faith is therefore strong, that henceforth He will "be your guide, and lead you for his mercy's sake." You weep no more, for joy that a child is given unto you; and your daily heartfelt prayer for that child is, that when he shall have fulfilled his days upon earth, he may join the angel-choir of heaven. The infinite mercy of God hath turned curse into blessing;—for the seed of the woman has bruised the serpent's head! God and man are by Christ Jesus again reconciled; and "the face of our enemy" is shamed and confounded: his short triumph is changed into defeat; and the *once fallen* victim of his subtlety is raised to strength,

and holiness, and victory. It is then that your heart thus expands the prayer and its response. "O God! I leave this thy house and this nearer and more special communing with Thee, which shelters me as in a tower of strength. I am about to resume the course of my earthly pilgrimage, no longer in the immediate tower of my strength. O still be Thou near at hand, a very present God to help me; and as I walk with Thee, my Saviour and my God, lead me for thy Name's sake—for by thy name, O Lord Jesu Christ, am I called, and by the glorious name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost am I in covenant with Thee."

The third and last supplication, with its response, indicates the natural feelings of the minister and the worshipper, after asking so great blessings, and imploring a favourable acceptance of these out-pourings of a grateful heart. They are expressions, the most earnest, most humble and heartfelt, that the Lord would hear their prayer, and would help them. They feel, that manifold indeed are the blessings which they have together asked; and nothing but a firm trust in the divine mercy could have emboldened their hearts to the service: they therefore, in a spirit of deep self-abasement, present themselves as unworthy suppliants, "Lord, hear our prayer and let our cry come unto Thee." The minister prays for all; "Lord, hear our prayer." The response adopts the most earnest, most humbling language; being the outpouring of a soul, whose gratitude finds no meet expression for mercies so vast and undeserved.—"And let our cry come unto Thee."

The Church, trusting that since the promises are sure—"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to

thee;" and "whatever we ask in Christ's name, God will grant"—closes the service with a prayer so comprehensive yet so full; so pure in its spirit, so monitory in its very strain of gratitude; a prayer altogether so impressive, so touching; that for *any* to engage in it unmoved, were surely impossible. How deeply the *Mother's* heart must adopt its sentiments, and rejoice in the apt language it supplies for the due expression of her gratitude—none but herself can tell! Or where is the Mother, who after sincerely sharing in this service, feels not her soul so strengthened against trial, her heart so braced to meet firmly the varied and perhaps increasing difficulties, which may await her, in returning again to the world and its duties, that she has no fear either that the firmness of her faith should yield, or the brightness of her hope dim. Her strength is in the Lord, who hath helped her: and the past is her surety for the future. Her faith becomes practical. Perhaps poverty may be her portion: still, she cannot forget that she is equally under the care of the Most High, with the richest and the noblest of the land. The same God is her preserver, the same God her Redeemer, the same God her sanctifier. The great as well as the lowly have no other trust amid those trials which are the common lot of humanity. And is not this a sustaining thought in the prospect of added cares—a thought full of most soothing consolation? a thought, calculated to induce contentment under the severest trials? And when one is found, who practically applies these reflections, how beautifully does her example illustrate the Apostle's cautionary assurance, that "Godliness, *with* contentment, *is* great gain."

It may be said—that all this religious feeling; this patient forbearance, this unmurmuring submission, this calm meeting of trials, can exist without the Church's aid, as offered in this service. True! It may be so. There may be minds so wondrously constituted—so wise, so good, so resolute in holiness, so watchful for occasions to give glory to God, and to devote themselves to his service, that they need no such aid. The Church of Christ however provides, not for the exceptions, but for the great mass of mankind. And the generality of minds do need some assistance. Nor is it possible that any aid can be better fitted to the need, than the service offered for this occasion. Indeed none ever availed themselves of it, in a becoming spirit of teachableness and humility, but they had reason to rejoice and bless the hand held out to help them. Or does the warm heart feel confident that if the expression of gratitude were left to be displayed at any time, it would be expressed at all? —or is it thought enough to cherish a grateful feeling in the heart, and not give expression to it before men? Was David in error when he preferred "declaring God's truth in the great congregation[1]," to hiding within his heart his sense of God's righteousness? Man in his fallen state requires some fixed ground, as it were, whereon to rest the fulfilment of his solemn religious duties: for to withdraw the mind from these vague and wandering thoughts which are continually rising up to perplex and harass, and which the evil One with cunning skill directs against our faith and hope, is a task to which few of us are equal, unless we withdraw ourselves at fit seasons, from the world,

[1] Ps. xl. 11.

and cherish that stern sense of the presence of our God; that feeling of entire dependence equally upon his providence and his grace; that love of his holy name, and reliance on his love; which constitutes the soul's best safeguard amid its dangers and its trials. And is it nothing to the poor and the lowly, that they share with the rich and great these holy services? Nothing, that they find there displayed to them in its practical bearing upon the circumstances of life, the blessed gospel of Christ Jesus! Nothing, that it is so presented to them in all the purity of its doctrines, all the fulness of its precepts, all the glory of its promises! Surely some gain is theirs, who in poverty learn contentment; in tribulation, patience; in self-denial, cheerfulness. Yet such is the lesson which the Church teaches in this service. And where Faith thus receives children as an heritage and gift which cometh of the Lord, it gains so firm a reliance on the love of the Giver to bless the gift, that no vain fears disturb the enjoyment of its blessings. Hence we find those who are animated by this faith, poor though they may be, and of the world unfriended, still enlarging their hearts in all the noble spirit of unselfishness, still cherishing the kindliest sympathies and the tenderest affections, still having higher aims as the higher interests of their children rise around them, and with all their faculties bent to extended exertion for others' sake, rejoicing in the happy smiling faces of the children God has given them—their toil welcome, their industry sweet, their care lightened; for their trust is in the goodness and bounty of Omnipotence.

CHAPTER VIII.

PUBLIC BAPTISM OF INFANTS [1].

THUS rejoicing in the birth of your child, as a precious gift from heaven; and pondering in your heart the monitory truth, that for the right use of every blessing we must give account, you feel that a special responsibility is attached to *this* blessing; for another's welfare than your own is at stake, in time and in eternity: and that other, the child which is dearer to you than yourself. You feel therefore, that if it be a parent's care to provide things necessary for the body, it is a still more important care to take heed that things necessary for the soul be not wanting: for though the

[1] Though the observations in explanation of this service might seem at first more properly to have been addressed to godfathers and godmothers, yet as they, if by the death or incapacity, or negligence of parents, they be called upon to instruct the children in the nature of their baptismal covenant, and the duties and privileges connected with it, do in fact stand in the place of parents, and *then* bear the *whole* of that responsibility which in ordinary cases they share, it has been thought right still to address them, to parents. In either view of the case they are intended for the Christian guides of children baptized. Nor can sponsors feel too solemnly the sacredness of the trust they undertake, or its inestimable value to those on whose behalf they undertake it. They undertake to watch over the young members of Christ's Church, that they "be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to the praise of his Holy name," and lose not their covenanted title to an inheritance in heaven. The children learn to bless a care, which has in view their best interests in time and in eternity. The Church has thus a guarantee that there be no apostatizing, no going back, no neglect; but that the child, thus baptized, "be virtuously brought up, to lead a godly and a Christian life;" by the *grace which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

life, upon which your child has entered is a transitory state, it is also a passage into an eternal state of being—where happiness or misery will be its portion for ever. Hence, a great work is before you—so to guide its steps into the right way, that it may "eschew the evil, and do good:" so shall its immortality be blessed. To this end, as its powers of reason expand, and the passions and affections, at first apparently dormant, awake to action, yours be the task so to direct that reason, curb those passions, and regulate those affections, that they prove no stumblingblock in the way to heaven. Now perhaps, as you bend over its happy countenance, beaming with smiles, you can hardly imagine it possible that the time can come, when all the infirmities of a fallen nature will have grown with its growth, and be continually struggling for the mastery. But you know such to be the fact. Your anxious care therefore is, to be beforehand with evil; and with that unwearying vigilance, which mothers feel most deeply, train your child for good. You welcome the bidding to bring your loved infant to Christ, place it, through Him, in covenant with the God of grace, and thus secure its best interests in time and in eternity; being encouraged thereto by the example of the blessed Jesus himself, who, having assumed our nature, was in early infancy dedicated to God.

Entrusted as you feel yourself with the care of an immortal soul, every wish is centered in its welfare. Who can tell the many secret prayers of your heart, that the child, whose birth is cause to you of joy, pure, holy, heavenly, may never have reason to lament its birth; but may be trained so to know and love the *Lord its* Maker and Preserver, that through life it

may rejoice to adopt the pious language of the Church, and "bless God for its creation and preservation." Yet *that* it can only do, when it shall be established in righteousness, by a Christian faith and a Christian hope. You therefore gratefully bring this dear infant, that he may be baptized, according to Christ's holy ordinance; "in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" and so enter into covenant with God.

That in this solemn though joyful work, you may engage with that reverence which befitteth creatures approaching their Creator—sinners, drawing nigh unto their God—the Church has provided a service, which has only to be understood to be appreciated—so scriptural is it, so instructive, so comforting. To a right feeling of it however, at the time when you are immediately engaged in it, nothing would more directly tend, than a careful previous meditation upon it. And, in proportion as your service is, not merely that of the lips, but of the heart and the understanding also, so have you the better hope of finding a gracious acceptance of it by the Being to whom it is offered[2].

[2] Before the service commences, the minister asks—"Hath this child been already baptized, or no?"

The reason for this question is, that the Church, agreeably to the solemn declaration of apostolic faith, believes in one only baptism for the remission of sins, (see Eph. iv. 5. and the Nicene Creed). The analogy too instituted by our blessed Lord,—"Marvel not that I say unto thee, ye must be born again"—holds good throughout; and affords a most happy and intelligible illustration of the point. As in our flesh, so in our spirit, we are born but once. We may be weak, and recover our strength; be sick and regain our health; accidents of various kinds may befal us, and be remedied; but once only are we born. And as the body before birth, though in existence, is yet dead as to any consciousness of life and action, so the soul,

The service opens with an address, reminding you of the necessity for every soul, which desireth salvation, to accept the new covenant, of which baptism is the appointed seal: for since by nature all are born in sin, so by grace in Christ Jesus alone can all be made alive. And in this address how wisely and how carefully does the Church distinguish between a mere assumption of spiritual privileges and a holy fulfilment of the duties connected with them! How faithfully does she warn every man, and how explicitly does she teach every man that, a new birth is but an entrance upon new duties—that to remain "a member of Christ, and a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," there is to be no resting upon profession; no trusting to the outward ordinance; no folding of the hands in slumber, and waiting for some irresistible impulse to the work of the Spirit. The power is there, of grace: and the privilege is there, to pray for strength to exercise it. Hence the startling address of St. Paul to the sinful professor of the Gospel: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Hence too the earnest prayer of the Church,

however it may have within it the latent powers of spiritual life, yet cannot exercise them acceptably before God, till it be new born by his Spirit in Christ Jesus. Further, as in the beginning of his ministry, our Lord in a manner and in language too clear to be mistaken, did thus argue the necessity of being "born of water and of the Spirit," so at the close of it, in his last commandment, after his resurrection, and immediately before his ascension into heaven, He confirmed the duty by the emphatic and universal command—"Go ye and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And to this day, by this one baptism—the Church admits into the family of God,—the once fallen sons of Adam.

that each individual admitted by holy baptism into the family of God, may be a *lively* member of the same. How much instruction does that word convey.—"Go now, thou who hast entered into covenant with God by baptismal regeneration—go forth into the world no longer conformed to it, but transformed by the renewing of your mind. Prove your new birth by your new life. Be active in every good word and work, as one who is a *living* member of Christ. Add to your faith, virtue; and walk as one of the family of heaven. Delight as a child of God to do a Father's will; to depend on a Father's love; and walk as under a Father's care." Thus you will teach your children, as their minds open to instruction, that all their Christian privileges are vain, all their glorious prospects as covenanted children of God are forfeit, unless a holy life follows a holy faith. Wonder not, then, that at the very opening address of this service the Church beseeches parents, and sponsors, and all who are present [4], to seek in prayer such a continuance of the divine blessing that the holy Spirit of God may not be received in vain; and that the child now to be baptized may, in after life, so exercise those graces which are the fruits of the Spirit of God, as to give proof that the same Spirit is in him. Further, to encourage you in the work, she reminds you of your own covenanted privilege of "calling upon God your *Father*." How gladly *again* springs your heart to the exhortation! How readily do you *again* so ap-

[4] *All Christian* people have an interest in this service; for all, named by the name of Christ, and born again of Baptism, constitute the one great Christian family of God on earth; whilst angels and the spirits of the just made perfect form his family in heaven.

proach Him on behalf of your child [5]. How earnest is your deep felt supplication that He will extend to this present infant that care and protection, which from your youth up until now has been *your* defence. You *know* that He has never failed *you*. Nay, you are free to confess that, in your utmost need, He has been your ready friend—a *very* present help in the needful time of trouble. "O Father!"—so whispers your anxious heart—"O Father! hear my prayer for the spiritual and eternal welfare of my child! receive him favourably into thy covenant of grace, that when removed from the sheltering wing of his earthly parents, he may so walk with Thee, his *heavenly* Father, that defended by thy power and guided by thy grace, he may gain thy love, attain thy promises, and be thine, O God, for ever!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST PRAYER.

"Almighty and everlasting God .... through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In the opening of this prayer we are reminded that, among the glorious attributes of God, his eternity shines conspicuous. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He who saved his faithful of old time, is at hand to save his faithful now. And if now the means which He thereto appoints be such as appear to us, either by their simplicity inadequate to their purpose, or, in their spiritual application, above our reason to comprehend, we are taught to strengthen

[5] See page 25.

our faith in the present by directing our thoughts to the past. Thus, are we inclined to wonder what benefit can accrue to the soul from the holy ordinance of baptism? we look to God's dealings aforetime, and as He "saved Noah and his family in the ark from perishing by water—as He did safely lead the children of Israel, his people, through the Red Sea, figuring thereby his holy baptism—as by the baptism of his well beloved Son Jesus Christ in the river Jordan He did sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sin,"—so we humbly trust, that since the *same* power existeth ever; the *same* love abideth ever; the *same* care is ever at hand; He will as surely sanctify and save us *now*, if our faith fail not, as He sanctified and saved them *then*[1].

Noah and his family "were saved in the ark." Yet was their salvation of faith in its true sense—faith being emphatically the evidence of things not seen. A flood was *threatened* which should destroy all flesh. But God, in his forbearance, for more than one hundred years delayed the judgment; and "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," He appointed Noah to be a teacher of righteousness, that knowing the terrors of the Lord he might persuade men. And what though Noah preached faith, and was unheeded? he himself obeyed according to his faith, and was saved. Commanded to build an ark for his safety, when as yet there were no signs of danger, he was engaged in a work, *apparently*, without an object. For what expectation could there be of

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 20.

a flood of waters overspreading the earth, destroying man and beast, when the soil was watered by gentle dews; and rain had never fallen even to refresh the earth, much less to destroy it? Suppose, therefore, that Noah, from want of faith, had neglected the warning; or, professing to believe, had lacked obedience—suppose him to have been deterred from his work by the sneers and ridicule of those who mocked a labour which seemed so needless; or to have been deluded by the proud suggestions of others, who, disbelieving what they could not comprehend, mocked that work of which their reason saw neither the necessity nor the use—or suppose him to have yielded to the still more subtle temptation of deferring preparation against the evil day, till there should be sure indications of its coming; and to have listened to the wily reasonings of the wicked, that *then* were time enough to repent, and believe, and obey—suppose Noah yielding to any such suggestions, had been induced to forego, on his own part, and to have forborne urging upon others, the building of the ark; and because he could see no reason for the work, *not* to have prepared the appointed refuge, the necessity for which rested only on *future* threatenings;—we can well understand, that by disregarding the outward and visible sign, he would have failed of the grace and favour of which it was the appointed pledge. The day of vengeance would have overtaken *him*, as it overtook *others*, *unprepared;* and the waters would have overwhelmed him, together with those who had deluded him. Nor hill nor mountain, nor power nor skill, availed to save. The ark—the ark, and the ark

alone, rode safe above the water-flood [1]. Thus Noah is our example. He believed, and in faith he obeyed. "According to all which God commanded Noah, so did he." His work, throughout, was a work of *faith*. God commanded to build, and gave the fashion of the building; and Noah built the ark, though reason could discern no object for a labour so long, so great, so wondrous. You know, however, the history. Destruction came upon the earth by a new agent, for which, though God had forewarned the people, they, in their proud disregard to his warnings, were totally

[1] The history of this event clearly indicates, that as a preacher of righteousness, Noah had great and various difficulties to contend against in executing his office; whilst, no doubt, his severest individual trial was the apparent fruitlessness of his ministry. For above a hundred years was he engaged in preaching righteousness, and by his own example fulfilling the righteousness he preached. Daily and hourly was his life a course of patient faith and active obedience. He built the ark diligently and unweariedly under the immediate teaching and direction of his God; for he believed, that though whilst engaged in the work there was no human probability of the danger foretold, yet that what the Lord had spoken would surely be accomplished. Oh the mockery and reproach, the ridicule and scoffing of the world around him, when he was engaged in this act of faith! "See this driveller," they would say, "hearken to his preaching of an impossible danger; at least a danger so remote and unheard of, that he must be a mere dreamer! See him toiling upon this ark, and, as he says, 'working out his own salvation!' Mark the vanity of his design, the absurdity of his toil, the folly of his warnings! To-morrow's care will do for to-morrow's danger." Thus we may imagine the infidels and scoffers, and the wicked generally, to have reasoned. Yet the morrow came at last, and brought death. These mockers perished, and the despisers of the preacher of righteousness perished in their unbelief. Sad, indeed, to Noah must have been the thought, that all his preaching had been vain. Yet his "labour had *not* been vain: for it had been in the Lord." He *had* "worked out *his own* salvation," and *by faith* he was saved. Let us go and do likewise.

unprepared [1]. Doubtless, they would then fain have entered into the ark of safety: their cruel mockings would then be changed into lamentations, their scorn into entreaty, their unbelief into despair. But the door was shut [2]. The righteous believer and his family alone were saved. So when the waters of death shall begin to overflow, and those terrors come, the thought of which so many heed not now—happy, thrice happy they, who, admitted into the ark of God's Church, ride there high above the waters in safety and in peace: their patient faith rewarded, their willing obedience recompensed, their undying hope triumphant [3].

Further to encourage our faith in this sacrament,

[1] This is most plainly declared by our Divine Teacher himself Luke xvii. 26, 27. "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all."

[2] So, in the striking parable of the ten virgins, we are in most forcible and startling terms admonished not to put off repentance: for the day of grace may close upon lingering sinners, ere they make their peace with heaven; and the day of judgment overtake them unrepenting. This too, not because God's grace fails, or his mercy closes; but because death overtakes them *in* their sin. And though, like Dives, each sufferer would fain escape his torments, to such the awful answer of the Lord of life is as clear as the warning inference which He draws is salutary. "Lord, Lord, open to *us*"—was the agonized cry of the excluded. "But he answered and said, Verily I said unto you, I know you not. *Watch therefore*, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh." Matt. xxv. 11.

[3] This blessed truth is not weakened, because, of those who thus were saved in the ark, all were not afterwards equally righteous. The continuance of God's favour, though the favour itself is of his free grace, is yet conditional as to our reception of it. So the grace of baptism, however some after baptism may for a time, or even finally, fall from their stedfastness, loseth not its benefits to those who faithfully fulfil the conditions of it.

we are reminded that even in saving his people Israel from the armies of Egypt, by giving them a safe passage through the raging waters of the sea, the Almighty did "figure his holy baptism." Not only was this way of safety one which neither human wisdom had in its utmost stretch of hope ventured to point out, nor human courage had dared to enter on; but it was that very way, which *appeared* opening for their destruction. Behind them were the armies of Egypt; fierce against any enemy; more fierce against their liberated captives: before them were the agitated waves; ready, as it seemed, to overwhelm them: yet those very waves, which appeared to be gathering for their destruction, became the means of their preservation. Idly chafing in their fury, and powerless to harm, they became a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left. They were salvation. Now these outward means, so efficacious because ordained of God, were exactly those which, if proposed by human reason, would have been held a mockery. So through the waters of baptism, because it is the way appointed thereto of God, we enter into covenant with Him; are set free from our spiritual foes—the world, the flesh, and the devil; and walk in a lively hope of reaching that peaceful shore, where the land of promise will welcome us as the people and children of God.

Still more to animate us in thus bringing our children to this holy ordinance, the Church reminds us, that the blessed Jesus himself submitted to it; and the record is left a perpetual encouragement to those who wish to obey: for it was on being "baptized with water and the Holy Ghost," that a voice from heaven declared of Him—"this is my beloved

Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus taught, thus encouraged, thus animated, surely the faith of the weakest may strengthen, and the hope of the dullest brighten.

Well then may you trust humbly, but firmly, that God will mercifully look upon you in bringing your children to baptism; that He will graciously give not only pardon for that share of original sin which attaches to every human being; but, vouchsafing deliverance from his wrath, receive them into the Church of Christ, and prepare them for their inheritance in heaven. In stating your view of the benefits of baptism, you are so far from presumptuously supposing that your child is thereby irreversibly received into the favor of God, or cannot fall therefrom, that you distinctly refer his future stedfastness in faith, his joy in hope, his life of Christian charity, to a *continuance* of the grace for which you pray; whilst your retrospect of God's dealings with his covenanted people have convinced you that his mercies are infinite. By these mercies you implore of God the gift of the Holy Ghost, to renew and sanctify those now brought to his baptism.

Perhaps youth may yet be yours, and you may know little of life beyond its calm and even flow to the prosperous; and as you bend over your smiling infant, may feel as if your happiness were unbounded. Think it not however beside the occasion, that the Church thus reminds you of the changing nature of human happiness—warns you that the waters of life, now so still, and calm, and bright, may soon be turbid, dark, and furious; while "the waves thereof rage and swell, and *the mountains* shake at the tempest of the same."

The page of experience is in too sad proof, that no state is so elevated, but that sorrows can reach it; no condition so illustrious, but that care can dim its splendour; no course so peaceful, but disquiet shall cross it; no virtue so retired, but detraction may reach it. Some sorrows, too, there are, deep and silent: sorrows unknown to the world, and which if known would meet with little sympathy. What secret anguish springs from kindness ill-requited, exertions ill-appreciated, actions maligned, motives ill-understood! To these, in their varied modifications of sadness, we are all equally liable in that world, upon which, as upon a stormy ocean, your infant has now entered. But faith conquers fear! True! as the words strike your ear, your mind, by that power which is all its own of darting into futurity, and agitated by the power of your maternal fears, anticipates with dread the share of these ills which may be the lot of your child; till you remember HIM, to whose care you are about to consign so helpless a charge. *He* is the *same*, ever! And as with his disciple, so with each one of us in covenant with Him; his power is at hand so to bid the waters and the winds be still; so to calm the angry passions of the soul, regulating the affections, and controlling the will, that "stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity," you hope firmly that your child may finally come to the land of everlasting life, and there reign with God, world without end, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

To sustain you in this view of the blessings of the baptismal covenant to your child in its future trials, you should call to mind how wondrously you have been preserved in your own trials, and delivered "what

time as the storm fell upon *you*." "When the sorrows of death compassed you," faith did bear up your courage, hope spake comfort, and charity was left in your heart so full, that peace and good will reigned there. You had drawn nigh to God; for you were in covenant with Him. Say, then, is not the same covenanted mercy pledged in baptism to your child, in *his* hour of need?

CHAPTER X.

SECOND PRAYER.

Almighty and immortal God . . . . preserved by Christ our Lord.

In the invocation of this second prayer there is a striking union of deep humility on your part, as a supplicant, with a nobly expanded view of the majesty of Him to whom your supplication is offered. Casting off all dependence upon yourself, you strengthen your faith in God, by contemplating Him in the immensity of his power, and the infinity of his love—"*Almighty* and *immortal*; the aid of all that need, the helper of all that flee to Him for succour, the life of them that believe, and the resurrection of the dead." Whether rich or poor, great or lowly, you feel equally the need of that aid which God alone can give, the necessity for that help without which the strongest are but weak, the want of that spiritual life without which we are but dead before Him, and the hope of that eternal life which springs only from faith in Him who is himself the resurrection of the dead. Under these solemn *feelings* you call upon God for your infant. O! how

earnest is your call! And who shall wonder at your anxious care that the Divine favor may rest upon him; that not only the stain of original sin may be washed away, but that the power of sin may be subdued in him, and the Spirit of grace so fully vouchsafed to him, that, though he can never be sinless in this sinful world; never of himself strong; he may never so sin but that he may repent, never so fall but that he may rise again, never so offend but that he may be pardoned — either sustained or recovered by that power which to the covenanted children of God is ever at hand, "to strengthen such as do stand, to comfort and help the weak-hearted, to raise up them that fall, and finally to beat down Satan under their feet[1]." Your inmost soul rejoices that "little children" come to this holy baptism: for if there be a season in the lives of fallen and unworthy creatures when, without presumption, they may look to receive their Creator's mercy, it is when their sin is not wilful, but that of the nature they inherit; ere yet, by deed, by word, by thought, they can possibly, actively and consciously, have sinned against Him[2]. And, alas! your own experience forbids the thought, that advancing years will render the natural man more pure, more holy, more immaculate. Feeling then that mercy dictated the command, in obedience to which little children are brought to Christ to receive his blessing; even the "remission of their sins by spiritual regeneration;" you proceed

[1] This passage from the Litany is only one of the many and striking instances of the beautiful harmony which pervades our Church Services severally with each other, and with the Word of God.

[2] God's ancient people were admitted into covenant with Him by circumcision, when eight days old.

with a hopeful appeal to God in his glorious majesty, that, according to his pledged truth, He would hear your supplication. His word is the strength of your hope. Hath He not assured you, that if you ask, you shall have?—if you seek, you shall find?—if you knock, it shall be opened unto you? And did you ever *ask* a blessing at God's hand, but He *gave* you either that for which you prayed, or grace to bear its denial? Did you ever search the Scriptures, and *seek* there hidden treasure, but that you *found* the riches of his grace! Did you ever in the dark hours of affliction earnestly and importunately pour forth your supplications for mercy, even as one in anxious haste *knocketh* at some friendly door when distress is upon him, but that you found the door *open* to you with an answer of peace?

And is not our hope a reasonable hope—that the infant thus about to enter into covenant with God, in the way by Him appointed, and with earnest prayer and supplication, "may enjoy the everlasting benediction of his heavenly washing, and may come to the eternal kingdom, which he hath promised by Christ our Lord[1]?" Nor could anything better represent the blessed effects of a heavenly Spirit, in removing our spiritual corruptions, than the purifying effects of water in cleansing the body. That the outward sign is also sanctified, giving hope of a corresponding inward grace, is clear, not less from the command to use it being divine, than from the outward act itself, with its accompanying benediction, being made manifest in the example of Christ. You close this prayer, with a supplication, in which all parents, high and low, rich

[1] Luke xii. 32. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's *good pleasure* to give you the kingdom."

and poor, one with another must equally join on behalf of their dear children; for the object of it carries our view far beyond this world and its temporary distinctions—even to that awful futurity which awaits every individual soul; and to gain happiness in which, all the world were an easy sacrifice [1]. "Let these children"—so methinks your heart supplicates—"O Father of all, let these children, however thou mayest see fit to try their faith in this passing world; let them come at last to thy heavenly kingdom! My soul shall then bless Thee, my lips shall praise Thee, and my heart shall repose upon thy mercy and thy love. O Father! forget not thy promise by Christ our Lord—to 'give us the kingdom.' Let me strengthen my faith and hope, by humbly trusting that if these dear infants have thy grace as their portion here, they may be hereafter received with the welcome salutation of their Judge, 'Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world [2].'"—Bear in your heart these hopes, and you will never want motive for a patient continuance in the arduous duty of training your children for heaven. Faith in the promises of God will cheer you on your way. You believe that in Him there will be help in *every* time of need, equally for you and for them. Be, then, sincere and in earnest when you engage in this service; and your anxious heart may well trust, that He whose "ears are ever open unto our prayers," will not fail to hear in mercy and answer in peace, *your* prayers; for the sake of that blessed Redeemer, whose servant and disciple you are,

[1] Matt. viii. 37. [2] Matt. xxv.

in whose death you trust for pardon, in whose resurrection you look to seal your own, and with whom, as now you share his kingdom of grace and peace and holiness, you hope to share hereafter his kingdom of glory.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GOSPEL. ST. MARK X. 13.

STILL the firmer to establish your faith, and to give to the sponsors a still livelier assurance that they are fulfilling a high and holy duty in thus "bringing this infant to Christ's holy baptism," the Church, having "in her treasure, things new and old;" ever prompt moreover to show her principles to be founded upon Jesus Christ, the rock of ages, and prove that she there rests all her doctrines, thence derives all her authority, and draws forth all her encouragements; introduces into the service one of the most striking passages from the Gospel-history. The Scripture is not less affecting than appropriate. It appeals to the tenderest feelings of the heart; and harmonizing with the warmest aspirations even of a mother for heaven's blessing on her child, sustains the faith of the weak, regulates the fear of the humble, and animates the hope of the desponding. It presents to our view the Saviour, identifying himself with all our tenderest sympathies; and whilst he instructs us to receive his laws with a teachable mind, illustrating the duty He requires from us, by the command, that we suffer the little children to come unto Him. In thus furthering the best interests of those nearest and dearest to us, we promote our own.

Does our blessed Lord show his marked favor towards little children?—does He look upon them compassionately, because, though inheriting Adam's nature; born in sin, and the children of wrath, they yet are free from those more earthly passions which lead to wilful and deliberate transgression?—does He view them tenderly, as from their unsuspecting inexperience they are comparatively helpless in the world's great strife? —He was touched with *all* the feeling of our infirmities, save sin; and who can say but that He retained perhaps some impressions of his childhood; remembered those alternate joys and sorrows of his earlier years, which from the very beginning of consciousness constitute human life a scene of trial and probation. The gentle rebuke of his sorrowing and anxious father and mother, when yet young He left them uncertain of his proceedings, might have recurred to Him, and called forth the tender compassion which marks his reference to them. How perfectly in consistence with his benevolence is it, that He should look with a tenderer regard and more marked favor upon those, who, as yet not hardened by the selfishness of the world, are in the freshness of unsuspecting confidence, and ready, without doubt or question, to receive support and guidance from the hand stretched out to help them. Indeed, you as a mother know, that nothing, except the helplessness of infancy, more surely wins upon your maternal affection, than the *confiding* character of childhood: implicitly trusting to your words, whether of reproof, instruction, or encouragement. *You* therefore can well understand why a heavenly Father requires from us, his children, a childlike faith in his word, a steady reliance upon his directions, and a

patient waiting for his promises. You can further understand, why He adopts often language expressive of human sympathies, when our ways are either evil or good [1].

Under these feelings, with what holy confidence do you heed the gospel-call to bring your children to Christ *now*, that his *preventing* grace may be at hand to grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength; rising victorious over the ripening passions: checking the evil they would induce, fostering the good they would destroy [2]. What a calming thought to your parental fears, that the blessing their Saviour now vouchsafes to them, is sealed [3] in the holy ordinance, whereby, according to his command, you have made them *his!* What a soothing hope, that if in after years the helpless babe now solemnly devoted to God, be so tossed by the waves of this stormy world, that sorrow and misery be his portion—if troubles multiply; if disappointment, poverty, sickness, bring accumulated ruin; if he be forsaken of the world—your heart knoweth that he will not be forsaken of his God. The gracious Being who once blessed him, "will never leave, never forsake him." God forsakes man *never*. If they be separate, it is, that man forsakes God [4]. Nay, faith whispers to you, that

[1] The wicked "grieve him at his heart." Gen. vi. 6. With respect to the righteous, "he rejoiceth over them for good."

[2] Exactly so the wise husbandman provides good seed, and sows it in his field, that he may pre-occupy the ground; lest tares find entrance there, and spring up to his ruin.

[3] 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

[4] "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God."

even such afflictions to one who is in covenant with God through Christ, are sent in mercy for Christ's sake, to win back, by an earnest repentance, the soul which may have erred from Him.

Methinks, the more you thus meditate, the more highly you will prize, and the more gratefully cling to this anchor of your hope. Is there aught the world could give you of power or influence, riches or enjoyment, which would induce you to risk for your child loss of the blessing conveyed to him in this hope? "Forbid it, gracious heaven!"—is the secret language of your heart: and as you hang over his infant smiles, you delight to remember his covenant with God at this holy ordinance, where, in all its freshness, shines the promise of the Saviour's blessing, the Father's love, and the Spirit's comfort.

It were needless to remind you, a Christian parent, that though the divine blessing alone can bring your patient training to a prosperous issue, you must not be wanting in the most strenuous exertions. No relaxation in your watchfulness, no fancying your work done, whilst reason is yet young, and your counsel and guidance can avail for your child's benefit. The holy Scriptures are particularly explicit on this point; as well for the encouragement of the good, as the warning of the bad. If parents suffer the spiritual welfare of their child to be neglected, and, owing to that neglect, he perish in iniquity, God's severe anger will be upon them, and dreadful must be the remorse awaiting them. If, on the other hand, they strive to the utmost in training him to holiness and virtue; yet, after all, he perish—grieve they will and must—but the responsibility is not theirs. They are free from his sin. The

father, in that case, "beareth *not* the iniquity of the son [1]." Nay, rather, you are encouraged to a careful and unwearied training of your children with reference to their eternal interests, by the soothing and gratifying assurance which the Word holds forth to you, that "your labour is not in vain in the Lord;" and also, by the encouraging hope which a mother's love so quickly catches, that the special favour with which, as the Gospel shows, the Lord of life regards "little children," will keep them safe even to the end.

EXHORTATION.

"Beloved, ye hear . . . . . give thanks unto him."

UPON this view of a parent's privilege in bringing children to baptism, is founded the exhortation which follows it, reminding you that, in your work and labour of love, you are fulfilling the Saviour's own command. It gives additional point to the Scripture itself, by contrasting severally the rebuke and the encouragement conveyed—our Lord not only encouraging the willing mind, but rebuking the backward; mortifying at once pride of heart and pride of intellect. We find Him, first, declaring, that "whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein;" and then affording a practical illustration of his doctrine, by "taking up these little children in his arms; putting his hands upon them and blessing them [2]."

[1] Exodus xviii. 20. The whole of the chapter claims from Christian parents and their children the deepest consideration.

[2] The expression adopted by the Church is peculiar. She infers from the Scripture respecting little children, that our Lord "exhorteth

Nor doubt as to bringing your children to Christ, because they are unconscious of your act of faith. They are equally unconscious of their own imputed sin, which renders that act necessary;—yet, even so, no mark of endearment was wanting from the gracious Redeemer, to win their confiding love; and convince them of his favor. His very "outward gesture and deed declared his good-will towards them."

Surely ample encouragement is here given for the humble but animating hope that the same gracious Being, who changeth not, will likewise so favourably receive those infants who now from time to time are brought to Him. We are to rejoice therefore in the goodness and love of God, who there offers his *preventing* grace—grace which shall *prepare* the souls of your children for probation: fitting them to meet coming trial, haply removing from their course many an evil, unseen even by your anxious eye, and guiding them safe through all dangers. We are too apt to forget how much we owe to this *preventing* grace. It is our good angel to clear our way for us. That this is no fancied view of the power of the Holy Spirit you can bear ample testimony from your own experience. Where is the doubt, which in answer to prayer, this Spirit has not been at hand to remove? Where the danger, which it has not given you power either to

all men to follow their *innocency*." By which term we are to understand her as speaking of their simplicity and teachableness of mind before men, and the absence of wilful sin; not freedom from imputed sin through Adam's transgression. It is because they are *not* innocent of imputed sin, that they are brought to Christ in baptism; whereby the sin imputed by the first Adam may, as we humbly trust, be removed by the imputed righteousness derived from the second Adam.

escape or to overcome? And shall not the same Spirit be vouchsafed to your dear and loved children? *Your* God is *their* God. It were impossible then to doubt his favourable acceptance of a service entered upon at his command, and according to his ordinance. Still further, however, to encourage your hope of gaining the divine blessing upon this your charitable work, you proceed to offer a prayer, uniting fervent praise for your own call to the knowledge of God's grace, with an earnest supplication that the same grace may, in all its holiness, all its comfort, all its power, be vouchsafed to the infant about to be baptized.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PRAYER.

"Almighty and everlasting God . . . . . now and ever."

OBSERVE how instructive as well as comprehensive is the opening of this prayer! First we are powerfully reminded both of the extent and nature of God's mercy towards ourselves, and of the weighty responsibility which lies upon us rightly to apply it. What but infinite mercy, and the free undeserved exercise of it, led an offended Creator to plan his glorious scheme of redemption, and "according to his own purpose and grace [1]," bring man to the knowledge of it by faith in Christ Jesus? And what does that knowledge reveal to us? God is presented to us as the object of our faith under new and endearing relations—a reconciled Father, a prevailing Mediator, a holy Comforter. But nothing less than infinite love could have

[1] 2 Tim. i. 8.

prevailed upon the Most High to have vouchsafed this knowledge to fallen, sinful man. In receiving from our heavenly Father this dispensation of mercy, unbounded as undeserved, can we be *too* thankful? can we ever be *duly* thankful? Think for a moment, how vast the blessing, when man, who is born to sin and trouble, has the privilege of asking, and the promise of finding pardon for his sin and help in all his trouble from the hands of "the almighty and the everlasting God!" In your own troubles, and of course you have your share, you have ever found refuge from them in the bosom of your God—"under the shadow of his wing hath He hid thee[1]." Shall we—*can* we—be thankless for a privilege like this? When the world frowns upon us, and either by lack of prudence on our own part, or evil designing on the part of others, we find ourselves perplexed and confounded; our very hearts sinking within us from disappointed views and fallen hopes; stricken down perhaps by the remorseless tyranny of the wicked, and made to eat the bitter bread of misery and shame—*then* to find consolation in a present God, is indeed the spring of unbounded gratitude. Full to overflowing, the grateful soul loves to pour forth its thankfulness in strains of praise and thanksgiving: yet is it with a chastened feeling. "We give *humble* thanks." Even in our thanksgiving, as indeed in our supplications, we feel our own demerits and unworthiness, and avow this knowledge of the Gospel, as God's free gift to his *undeserving* creatures. We further avow our dependence upon Him who gives the blessing, to *continue* it,

[1] Psalm xvii. 8.

enabling us by his grace to use it aright. How well does the lowliest humility consist with the firmest faith! How admirably is a check here put to all such presumptuous reliance upon baptismal regeneration as would leave the soul to rest its hopes of final acceptance upon the mere act of being baptized. What if we hope the Spirit will regenerate those who, according to Christ's command, are brought to his holy baptism? We hope for that same Spirit, *day* by *day*, continually to renovate the regenerated soul, and bring spiritual life to the active exercise of its powers "in righteousness and true holiness[1]." In baptism the Christian life but begins. The evidence of a new birth must be a new life. This new life of the soul, like the life of the body, will exercise its powers gradually, and by imperceptible degrees, as the powers of each severally strengthen. And as reason advances, we must remember with St. Paul, that "though it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do," we are not ourselves to fold our hands in slumber, but to "*go on* unto perfection." And to give due expression to these feelings we adopt the apostle's words—"*not* that we have attained." Thus we cannot but admire the beautiful harmony with Scripture which stamps this prayer, in which we implore Almighty God, that in his omniscience and omnipotence, He would vouchsafe to "increase this knowledge, and confirm this faith in us," "*evermore*"—even till, our course finished, our fight well fought, and our warfare accomplished, we pass from grace to glory.

Having been thus recalled to a recollection of our

[1] See the Collect for Sunday after Christmas-day.

own baptismal covenant, and having addressed this brief, but touching supplication for strength to confirm our minds and hearts in fulfilling the conditions of it and holding fast its blessings, we proceed to pray, more particularly, for the child brought to be baptized. With what earnestness you, a fond mother, must offer the prayer for your dear and helpless infant, every feeling heart may well understand. Your own experience, now vividly brought to memory, whilst it confesses of the past, that you have found no help but in your God, urges you to seek the same help for the time to come on behalf of your loved child. With what strained attention do you hearken to the voice of supplication, that God would "give his Holy Spirit to *this* infant!" How does your whole heart ascend with this petition to the throne of grace! How earnest your hope that it bring down the blessing for which you pray! You would naturally rejoice if any temporal advantage were secured to your child, though conditionally, and to be forfeited only by his own failure in fulfilling the conditions annexed: how carefully would you watch him as his powers expanded! how anxiously would you train him in all such courses as might best enable him to fulfil the prescribed conditions, and to escape the shame and misery of forfeiture; apportioning your care to the value of the benefit in prospect! Remember, then, that there is now the prospect of a *heavenly* inheritance for your child—remember also that it is by the sanctification of the Spirit in the covenant of baptism that God wills he be made meet for that inheritance. How fervent must be your prayer to God, to "give his Holy Spirit to this infant, that he may be born again, and

be made an heir of everlasting salvation." Your plea to be heard rests *not* upon any merits of your own; *not* upon your own sincere and heartfelt desire; *not* even upon the *unwilling* and *unconscious* sinful nature of your child; but solely upon the merits and mediation of "our Lord Jesus Christ." Nor can this plea fail. For He, on whom you rest it, "now and ever *liveth*" to make intercession for you [1]; "now and ever *reigneth* with your heavenly Father, *almighty* and *everlasting*," to accomplish his own work of man's redemption; and is *ever* One with the Father and the Holy Spirit to sanctify his people here, and hereafter to glorify them.—Happy Christian mother! rejoice that this glorious God heareth your prayer *now!*

ADDRESS.

"Dearly beloved, ye have brought . . . . . obediently keep his commandments."

THERE is something very affecting to a well-disposed mind in the salutary care with which the Church enumerates, in this address, the objects we have had in view throughout that part of the baptismal service in which we have been hitherto engaged: pointedly *reminding* us, both of the obligation of baptism and its benefits. This she does in a monitory strain, admirably calculated to encourage the devout, rouse the careless, recall the wandering mind, and impress upon all assembled, the high and holy character of the

[1] Heb. vii. 25. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make *intercession* for them."

ordinance. There is much wisdom in this; lest failure in sincerity and reverence on the part of the supplicants cause them to fail in gaining their own share of the blessing for which they make their supplication. For though we are sure, from the written word[1], that God, in his infinite love and mercy, will not withhold from the infant those blessings for which the Church, according to his ordinance, offers up her prayers; yet such share of divine aid as the worshippers themselves may hope for, to renovate their Christian graces—quickening their repentance, strengthening their faith, brightening their hope,—how can they expect it, if whilst with their lips they draw nigh to God, their hearts be far from Him, and the bended knee be the only offering? Hence you will "*receive* with pure affection" the monition conveyed in the opening of this address. Are your thoughts inclined to wander? recall them! Fix them steadily upon the great work in which you are engaged, and upon HIM, before whom, though He be invisible, you engage in it. So may you humbly trust to gain blessings not only for the infant, in whose welfare you are so deeply interested, but for yourself also.

In specifying the several benefits offered to your child in baptism, the address is distinct and clear; instructive and monitory.

It states that you have a *fourfold* object in view, when you beseech "your Lord and Saviour to receive this child. You pray that He would release him of his sins — sanctify him with the Holy Ghost — give him the kingdom of heaven—and everlasting life."

[1] See the Gospel appointed for this service.

And what though the infant be too young to have been guilty of any wilful sin! In sin was he born; to sin will be inclined as life advances; and as the stain of wilful sin can be removed only by virtue of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, so can he hope to rise victorious over its power, only by that grace which being God's gift to man through the merits of the Saviour; growing with his growth, strengthening with his strength; enables him, as temptations to evil accumulate, still to resist them, and triumph over them; till relieved from "the chains of those sins which bind the soul" in misery, he joyfully blesses the Lord, who "in the pitifulness of his great mercy looseth him."—Moreover, since penitence must be sanctified and strengthened by grace, lest again the soul sink into sin, you pray the Lord Jesus Christ, that He would "sanctify your child with the Holy Ghost." This indeed was your object in the two former prayers at the beginning of the service. You now however *repeat* your supplication for this sanctifying heavenly influence; and so, virtually, renew your own faith in Him as "the Lord and Giver of life." Nor can we too deeply, or too frequently, impress upon our minds both the humbling truth, that all our holiness is God's gift; and the consolatory promise, that it shall be given to all who ask it faithfully [1]. — You are next recalled to the immediate object of enrolling your child as one of the members of Christ—that God would be pleased to "give him the kingdom of heaven." By this expression is meant the Gospel itself, in all its power and with all its

[1] See the second prayer, p. 58.

blessings[1]; that *spiritual* kingdom, whose laws are divine, whose King came down from heaven to establish them in our hearts, and by his Spirit preserve us in a holy and happy obedience to them, even till his kingdom of grace be perfected in his kingdom of glory. — To attain that, his *heavenly* and glorious kingdom, is the fourth object included in your supplication—"give him *everlasting* life."

To keep your faith stedfast, the minister boldly declares that the promise of our Lord and Master Christ remaineth like a rock, firm and immoveable. "*He* will *most surely* keep and perform his promise" of blessing. So surely will He receive to himself the young children brought unto Him, that, for *his* part, never shall the union be broken: so surely will He release them of their sins, that there shall be no condemnation, if they live godly in Him[2]: so surely will He sanctify them, that the Spirit of God shall bear witness with their spirit, that they are of the children of God: so surely will He admit them to his spiritual kingdom, that He will make them "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God:" finally, so sure is his word, that having opened the kingdom of heaven to *all* believers, He is ready to welcome your child also to "the rest which remaineth for the people of God."

[1] The Gospel itself was first announced by the Baptist as "the kingdom of heaven." Matt. iii. 2. This explains the distinction between the two expressions, "the kingdom of heaven," and "everlasting life." The one means the Gospel kingdom established by Jesus Christ when He came down from heaven in the likeness of man: the other, his kingdom of glory, upon which He entered when He ascended up into heaven, and resumed his throne there.

[2] Rom. viii. 1.

But if the Church be thus careful and anxious to encourage and strengthen our faith by assurance of the certain fulfilment of Christ's gracious promise, not less is her care, not less her anxiety, that this faith be duly regulated. She reminds us that the promise of Christ, though it be absolutely of grace and free-will, is yet conditional. He, for his part, promises blessing: we, on our part, promise and vow a fulfilment of the conditions which accompany the blessing. Faith is not to rise into presumption, and render us reckless of active obedience: nor is zeal for the honour of the grace of God to be made an excuse for degrading the reason of man, and forbearing its exercise in fulfilling the appointed obligation. We are to receive humbly, unreservedly, and as of free-grace, the blessings of baptism: we are also to prepare ourselves for activity in holiness. In our baptism this is done for us by others; yet the vows which others then undertake for us are binding upon ourselves when we come of age to know right from wrong. The Church in thus wisely guarding against error in our reception of this holy sacrament, plainly instructs us in the true nature of the ordinance, and its influences upon the soul. She forbids the vain notion, that by virtue of this ordinance man is rendered sinless. It is an ordinance by which the guilt of original sin is done away, and grace is vouchsafed either to keep us from the commission of wilful sin, or if we fall into sin, to deliver us from its power and its punishment: that, like Peter, we may rise from our fall, and with him regain the love and favour of our God [1]. Therefore from the

[1] See chapter x. page 57.

infant is required a "promise," by its sureties, "to renounce the devil and all his works, *constantly* to believe God's holy Word, and *obediently* keep his commandments." These terms cannot but remind you of your own obligations; and the recollection must be salutary. You feel convinced that in proportion as you are careful to keep your own baptismal vow—a vow, the obligations of which rest upon us "to our lives' end"—your children will reverence your care, as you teach them to keep theirs. Let them, as they grow up, and are able to distinguish right from wrong, see in your own bright example of active piety, the full force of those obligations on which they have themselves entered. Let them see you, not only avoiding this or that particular sin, but since all evil is of the Devil [1], casting away, as hateful, whatever assumes the appearance of evil;—hating, abhorring, *renouncing* it. Let them see you exercising your faith in God, not only occasionally, when all goes smoothly and no severity of trial renders faith arduous, but uniformly; as well in tribulation and sorrow, as in peace and joy: "believing God's holy Word *constantly*." And in keeping God's commandments, let them see that you so do, "not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake [2];" not only to the letter, but in the spirit; not with a revolting heart, but a ready mind; humbly, firmly, *obediently*.

[1] 1 Thess. v. 22.

[2] Rom. xiii. 5.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BAPTISMAL VOW.

To this repentance, this faith, and this obedience your child is about to be pledged by his sponsors. Your heart pours forth its secret prayer for a blessing upon the work. As a mother, you will duly appreciate the watchful care of the Church, that her children be *duly prepared* to enter into their holy covenant with God; lest otherwise they mock Him, and risk their immortal souls. She therefore boldly demands of the sponsors a specific declaration of the three essential requisites in a child of God — repentance, faith, obedience.

REPENTANCE.

"Dost thou in the name . . . . . nor be led by them?"

As repentance—a ceasing from and rejection of evil—was the first call of the Gospel, so the sponsors are required, in the name of your child, to *renounce*, or put away with holy abhorrence, all evil, in whatever form it presents itself[1]; whether in the suggestions of his own heart, the allurements of the world, or the subtle designs of our great spiritual foe, the Devil, with all his works. With respect to the pomp and

[1] According to St. Paul's strong language, Rom. xii. 9. "*Abhor* that which is evil: cleave to that which is good." The expressions, in each case, being very significant of the struggle there ever is in the heart between good and evil; and the effort required so to reject, and overcome it, that we shall *allow* ourselves *only* in that which is *good*.

glory of the world, how vain *that* is, when depended upon as a source of happiness, they best can tell who, raised to earthly eminence, have found the added responsibility, the weightier cares, the severer disappointments which attend elevated station. They will tell you, that outward splendour is not happiness, and that their trials and crosses afford them another proof that comfort is to be sought from some higher source than the world. But not only are *they* warned against trusting to the pomp and glory of this world, who, in their high and illustrious station, might be dazzled by the splendour which surrounds them, and led to forget the next world and all its stern realities—*we* are *each* warned, that in our humbler spheres we should look for happiness, not from worldly success, but from that peace of mind and inward consolation which religion alone can give. To this end, we must not covet this world; we must "renounce" all the covetous desires of the same. If we covet what is above us—if, being poor, we covet the competence we have not; if, being easy in our circumstances, we covet wealth still unattained; if, being affluent, we covet power and influence yet beyond our grasp; then it will be with us, as with those who, being called to rank or riches, *trust* to their wealth and their glory. With us also, however lowly our station, all will prove vanity. Coveting what good we have not, we shall overlook the good before us. It is only with "contentment" that even "godliness is great gain." Further, the sponsors vow, in your child's name, to renounce "the carnal desires of the flesh." How fatally they mar their prospect of peace here and hereafter, who yield themselves slaves to their wild passions—the

lusts of the flesh—daily experience too fatally shows. It is well, therefore, that as your child grows up, and the passions strengthen, you remind him betimes of the solemn pledge, thus given in his name, that he will renounce them. Habituate him early to curb the first risings of evil in his heart, and give a noble motive to this self-controul, by reminding him that so, by God's grace, in answer to his prayers and yours, and in furtherance of his own good resolutions, he may redeem the pledge thus early given, and pay the vow thus early, but solemnly, made for him by others.

Mark the wisdom and humility with which the Church guards her requisitions to be holy, and just, and good; demanding purity of heart and righteousness of life! She does not for a moment suppose that the holy ordinance of baptism, to which you bring your children, will at once so extinguish evil, that in this life they can be altogether free from its influence, and cast from them all fear of its power. She does not suppose that no wrong thoughts will ever cross their minds. She knows that anger will arise upon injury, grief upon affliction; that prosperity will tempt to self-indulgence, adversity to murmuring. She is well aware that temptations will continually spring up, and cause a struggle for the mastery, which constitutes that fight of faith, fought by St. Paul so bravely and so well. If baptism set us above the possibility of sinning, it would make us not so much adopted children of God by grace, as angels. Whereas it still leaves us frail and erring creatures in ourselves, though capable of overcoming those frailties, and returning from those errors by the aid of the Spirit then vouchsafed—by nature, weak and fallible; by

grace, strong in the strength of the Lord, and wise in his truth. It leaves us to contend with evil, to resist the Devil, to struggle against ourselves—but doing all hopefully. God is, by covenant with us, to *help* us, if we be true to ourselves. *Thoughts* therefore of evil, in all their sad variety, various as are the circumstances of life which give rise to them, whether of joy or sorrow, peace or disquiet, love or hatred, hope or fear—*thoughts* of evil *will* arise. The Church beautifully teaches us wherein they lead us into sin. Her instruction indeed on this point is clear, and conceived in her wonted spirit of wisdom and charity. She requires, that when evil thoughts arise in our hearts; whether towards God, or our neighbour, or our own souls, we be neither surprised, nor daunted, nor yielding. The sin is not in the thought itself, if it be involuntary. There is yet an interval ere the wicked thought stamp us with guilt. If we welcome it—if we follow it—if we "be *led by it*"—*then*, alas! we make it our own—*then* we make it sin—we make it guilt! We are therefore required to pledge ourselves, not to the unreasonable condition of being above the frailties and infirmities of a fallen nature, but to a bold and unyielding resistance to them. They may invite us; but we "follow not." They may entice, but we "are led not." We resist successfully when we resist sincerely; because we are privileged to lean for help upon One that is Mighty. God is, by covenant, our Helper and Defender; and "if God be for us, who can be against us[1]?" To this point, therefore, the Church wisely directs our attention. As though she

[1] Rom. viii. 31.

warned us—"Welcome not the tempter when he suggests evil! do not for a moment entertain the thought! nor be terrified and confused if one evil thought succeed to another: resolutely reject them—put them aside—as St. James exhorts you, '*Resist*[1].' So shall you avoid the sin, though you bear the pain of the struggle. The Spirit of grace and truth, of holiness and strength is yours by covenant. Follow the motions of that Holy Spirit, you will be guided into all truth: be led by its wisdom, you will gain strength for victory." Your own heart will tell you that whenever evil has gained the mastery over you, it has been when you bade the tempter welcome. Does the Church thus instruct? her instruction is practical. We are in a world of probation; and our probation consists in resisting the temptations by which we are surrounded. These vary with the endless variety of circumstances which mark human life. A low estate has many trials; a high estate many, though of a different stamp. In the one case they are the sad, sinking miseries of poverty, perhaps of indigence; tempting to envy our neighbours' goods, and covet what we have not: in the other, they are the allurements of vanity and ease. In the soul of the injured springs up anger and the temptation to avenge. In the heart of the powerful the stirrings of ambition arise to blind him to mercy and justice. But in these and all cases the sin is not in the involuntary thought, but in pursuing it. Hence the Church, at the very outset, would warn us against the evil passions of our nature; "not to follow or be led by them."

[1] James iv. 7.

In what an admirable spirit of decision is the answer framed—"I renounce them all." It is in the very spirit which characterises alike the precepts and the example of our blessed Redeemer himself. "Cut off the right hand; pluck out the right eye;" said the Lord of life, when He would fit his followers for the glories of his kingdom. "Get thee behind me, Satan," was his emphatic address when the tempter would fain have persevered in assailing Him. So here, when questioned as to his bearing towards his spiritual enemies, and the spiritual evils arrayed against him, the covenanted child of God declares solemnly and decisively his renunciation of them. "I entertain them not—I welcome them not—I receive them not—I argue not with them—I allow not their plea—I follow not their guidance—I walk not in their path—I utterly cast them from me—'I *renounce* them all[1].'"

Here too, methinks, your thoughts for a moment pause in the service, whilst, with all a mother's full feeling, you offer a secret, heartfelt prayer, that the God of grace will enable your loved child so to keep this vow, that he be at last more than conqueror[2].

[1] It is very desirable that the sponsors should make the answers, which occur in the service, *distinctly*; in evidence that they are sincere in their office, and are in earnest when they undertake the duties and pray for the blessings of the Christian covenant. They *must* feel a deep and tender interest in the welfare of the helpless infant for whom they answer; it would seem wise, therefore, to pour forth prayers for blessings on it, *earnestly*—with all the heart and with all the soul. And by taking a proper share in the service the mind is much aided in preserving a devout attention.

[2] Rom. viii. 37.

CHAPTER XIV.

FAITH.

"Dost thou believe . . . . . everlasting life after death."

THE boldness of the preceding reply—"I renounce them all"—seems to pre-suppose confident strength. Yet when arrayed against spiritual foes; against "principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places;" man's strength is altogether weakness. Hence the Church proceeds diligently to examine into the nature and grounds of that Faith, by aid of which this boldness may be justified. She demands therefore of the sponsors, each individually to answer in the name of the infant brought to baptism, whether their faith be such, as to lead them to the Lord as the fountain of holiness, strength, and wisdom, for the work before them; lest, coming in their own strength to the work, they fail of blessing.

The foundation of true religion is the belief in one only God: and the Christian believes in that God—as God the Father, to preserve him; God the Son, to redeem him; God the Holy Ghost, to sanctify him.

Well may they be bold, whose God, though dwelling in heaven, where no man can approach unto, and ruling all things both in heaven and earth, is a merciful Father to them. "Like as a Father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him [1]." Sooner shall you, a loving parent, mock your children by giving them "stones for bread [2]",

[1] Psalm ciii. 13. [2] Matt. xvii. 9.

than their heavenly Father not grant the aid which they need, and the protection for which they supplicate.

But this blessed reconciliation with God the Father is effected solely by the merits and mediation of his only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. It is required, therefore, that we state distinctly and specifically what is our faith in God the Son; with the several particulars relating both to his divine and human nature: thus showing the grounds of faith and hope through Him. Accordingly we thus profess our belief in Him. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost; and so, a sinless Being: capable of presenting himself an offering in sacrifice, without spot or blemish, acceptable to God. He was born very man of the Virgin Mary, his mother; or He could not have yielded himself unto death: and "without shedding of blood was no remission of sins." He suffered unto Pontius Pilate at the time and in the manner foreshadowed by the prophets [1]. He was crucified, dead, and buried; as foretold by himself [2]. He went down into hell, the place of departed spirits [3]; confirming the animating truth which He had declared to his countrymen, that the patriarchs' God was a "God, not of the dead, but

[1] It was foretold of the advent of the Messiah, that it should take place when the "sceptre had departed from Judah." It did take place when the sceptre, the emblem of power, was in the hands of a *Roman* governor, and Judea a province of the Roman empire.

[2] Matt. xx. 19.

[3] Into that abode of rest was admitted the soul of the penitent thief; and there too shall our spirits, as we trust and pray, be admitted when separated from the body by death; awaiting their re-union with the body at the general resurrection.

of the living [1]." He also did rise again from the dead the third day; according to his own word.[2] He ascended into heaven; bearing thither the very body in which He had lived and died and risen again: for showing the resurrection of our own bodies at the last day. He sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; there "ever living to make intercession for us [3]"—from thence He shall come again at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead, according to his word [4]. Hopeful indeed is faith thus grounded. Our sacrifice was perfect; acceptable therefore before the throne of mercy. Every event was accomplished according to the word of God: his word, therefore, which is our title to heaven, is itself truth. The grave has no more terrors for the followers of the Saviour; He has conquered the grave. Death indeed separates, for a time, parents, children, relatives, and friends; but in the resurrection all shall live again. Jesus Christ, as the second Adam, has restored that eternal life which the first Adam forfeited; and has risen from the dead, "the first-fruits of them that sleep [5]." Even in the prospect of judgment this faith sustains the soul; for it finds in the Judge the very Being, who is also a compassionate Mediator, a prevailing Intercessor, a meritorious Sacrifice. Hence the wisdom of our Church in reminding you, as you bring your children to be bap-

[1] Matt. xxii. 32.
[2] Luke xxiv. 46.
[3] Heb. vii. 25.
[4] Matt. xxv. 31.
[5] See this part of the subject treated of more at large in the observations on the Lesson appointed for the Burial Service, 1 Cor. xv. 20.

tized, how great are the blessings of that faith to which you are about to pledge them.

Further, we "believe in the Holy Ghost." They best can tell the value of their faith in this the promised Comforter; who, in asking its assistance, and seeking its consolation, receive and find strength for their weakness and comfort for their sorrows: strengthened to resist temptations to evil, comforted amid the varied trials, temporal and spiritual, to which every follower of Christ is exposed in a world of probation like this; and able, without presumption, and even hopefully, to fulfil their vow of "renouncing" evil[1]. —We believe also in "the Holy Catholic Church," founded upon prophets and apostles; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. In its catholicity it is freely open to all who will accept its services; ready to receive all who will come under the shelter of its care: its members, wherever and however dispersed, being as one; holding one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all; the faith once delivered to the saints, who, "being many, are one bread and one body[2]."—But as of those who are called, some, we are told, will fall away from their stedfastness, we are yet encouraged to perseverance on our own part by believing in "the communion of saints." These are they who, true members of Christ's Church, pure in doctrine, pure in practice, not only profess the Gospel, but are sanctified thereby; and who, according to St. Paul's beautiful view of their state, are said, even on earth, to "have their conversation in heaven[3]." They have "com-

[1] Refer to pages 66 and 81. [2] 1 Cor. x. 17. [3] Phil. iii. 20.

munion with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost[1]." They have communion with angels, who "minister to them as heirs of salvation[2]" — What, however, would faith even thus do to comfort us, if we did not also believe in "the remission of sins?" Every man's own heart condemns him as a sinner before God; and the Christian well knows that the wages of sin is death. If therefore God were not "greater than our hearts;" ready to "forgive us all our sins and heal all our infirmities;" misery would be our portion here and hereafter. Wealth would be valueless, power weakness, the whole world vanity; from fear of that dread hereafter, when nor riches nor power could save the soul from death. Hence we believe, to our joy, that there is remission of our sins through Him, Jesus Christ our Lord, "who died for the ungodly[3]." — And what if in death our bodies return to their kindred dust? We know that they shall be made alive again; formed anew by the omnipotent will of the first Creator. Hence we "believe in the resurrection of the flesh:" for as Jesus died and rose again with his body, "even so those also which sleep in Jesus shall God," at the last great day, "bring with him[4];" their bodies raised from the grave and clothed with immortality. Lastly, we believe in "everlasting life after death." This article of our creed is founded upon the positive and explicit declaration of our Divine Teacher, who assures us that, whether to the wicked or to the righteous, there will

[1] 1 John i. 3. and 2 Cor. xiii. 14. [2] Heb. i. 14.

[3] Rom. v. 6. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

[4] 1 Thess. iv. 14.

be an existence for ever: to the former an eternal existence of woe, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched[1];" to the latter, an everlasting existence of rest, and peace, and joy, and glory: thus supplying to man the most constraining motive to abstain from sin; for "who shall dwell with everlasting burnings[2]?" and holding forth the most encouraging motive to holiness. If the dread of *unceasing* misery deter not from evil; if the hope of *unfailing* happiness animate not to good; threatenings of less terror must fail in the one case, and promises, which this world limits, must, in the other, prove vain. Hence the wise care of our Church in demanding your pledge, that this and other articles of the Christian faith shall be duly recognised as binding upon the person to be baptized.

The sponsors having each given a solemn declaration that they believe these articles of the Christian faith "all this I stedfastly believe"—the minister proceeds to enquire as to their *willing* service in thus coming forward, to enter into covenant with God, on behalf of your child: leaving them still free to accept or refuse being parties to it. Such care does the Church take, at once to preserve her authority and clear it of the charge, either of severity on the one hand, or of carelessness on the other. The question is put distinctly with reference to the faith, each separate article of which has been previously specified — "Wilt thou be baptized in *this* faith?" — The answer is prepared in that humble, but sincere spirit, which befits a mind duly impressed with the solemn duty in which it is engaging. The terms of it imply

[1] Mark ix. 44. [2] Isaiah xxxiii. 14.

a full sense of man's utter unworthiness to claim the privilege sought, at the same time they express, not only a freedom from compulsion and a readiness to accept its benefits, but an earnest longing after them —"That is my *desire*"—'If I be permitted so to do, gladly do I avail myself of that permission. The privilege is of God's free gift: as such I earnestly desire, and gratefully accept it.'

OBEDIENCE.

Faith without works being dead, the Church, preserving her truly apostolical character of setting forth "the whole counsel of God," closes her requisitions by demanding, how far they, who thus profess to believe the Word, are willing to obey it[1].—"Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?"

A more comprehensive and searching question language could scarcely frame. Every word is effective. The mind of each sponsor cannot but pause; retiring, as it were, into the secret chamber of its thoughts, applying the question individually; and, as the service progresses, instituting a self-examination. "Do I *thus*, on my own part, keep God's holy will and commandments—*obediently*[2]? Do I keep them in that spirit of submission to his authority and honour of his Word which is free from all hesitation, doubt, and cavil? Do I receive his Gospel with the simplicity of

[1] To believe all the articles of the Christian faith, as just enumerated, is, in fact, to believe the Word of God; for out of that Word they are all drawn, and upon it rests all their authority.

[2] *See page 75.*

little children, and obey, because in the voice which conveys the bidding I recognise one to whose authority as a heavenly Father I owe, and readily pay reverence, implicit, unreserved, unquestioned? Am I wise enough thus to keep, not only his commandments, as positively written in his Word, but also his *will*, which breathes in the spirit of those written commandments? Further, do I thus obey habitually, or only occasionally? Do I act from impulse, or from principle? with a view to please men, or in the humble hope of pleasing God? Perseverance is, I know, hard! yet surely the end to be attained may well sustain me. Looking forward then to that end, even life eternal through Christ Jesus; bearing in view also that I have the love of God the Father, the intercession of God the Son, and the fellowship of God the Holy Ghost—filled with this faith, I hesitate not in my reply. My answer is given in sincerity and truth —'I WILL.'

CHAPTER XV.

SUPPLICATIONS.

In how consistent a spirit of lowly piety does the Church, having received the promise of the person to be baptized, instantly, in her humility, turn to prayer, that the blessing of God may "prosper the work of her hand upon her," and his special favour rest upon the tender infant about to be dedicated to Him.

"*O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in this child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him.* AMEN."

Can there be imagined a more truly evangelical prayer than in this short sentence is contained—a prayer, which could tend more to exalt the Saviour's power, and lay open the sinner's weakness? What an acknowledgement is there of man's utter unworthiness, as descended from the first Adam! implying sin to be so hateful to us, that we are fain our corrupt nature be buried, and a new nature raised up in us, in conformity with that righteousness and true holiness which mark those born of the second Adam. And even this change is hoped for only through the mercy of our God.

"*Grant that all carnal affections may die in him, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him.* AMEN."

This second supplication explains the first, and shows that by the term "the old Adam"—is meant those "carnal affections," which we inherit from our first parents. The petition, that these "carnal affections may die" in the child now to be baptized, conveys our earnest hope that they may be utterly subdued in him; may be, as a vanquished foe, stricken to the death—no more having power to wound, or harm, or terrify. So you may humbly trust, that all spiritual graces may live in his heart, grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength; even like as we read it to have been with the youthful Saviour, who grew "in wisdom as in stature, and in favour with God and man." "O, my child," whispers your anxious heart, "God in his mercy grant such growth to thee!"

"*Grant that he may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh.* AMEN."

Lest, elevated by the high privileges of the baptismal covenant, the soul should think all must be well for the time to come, and the work of salvation be accomplished so securely that there can be no falling away; we are at once checked in a thought so perilous. We are recalled to the startling fact, that our salvation but now *begins*[1]. Baptism places us in contest with spiritual adversaries so powerful, so subtle, that Divine power alone can enable us to overcome them. Safe indeed we are, but not secure. Security implies that we are above the possibility of harm; safety, only that we have present freedom from it. Therefore we look to a merciful God, that He would from time to time give power and strength to have victory in this unceasing contest with the Devil, the world, and the flesh; and by his strength enable us at last to triumph[2].

"*Grant that whosoever is here dedicated to thee by our office and ministry, may also be endued with heavenly virtues, and everlastingly rewarded, through thy mercy, O blessed Lord God, who dost live and govern all things, world without end.* AMEN."

In this fourth supplication the Church, feeling her

[1] See page 68.

[2] The certainty of this unceasing spiritual contest is fully shown to be the doctrine of our Church, in her beautiful prayer for "the Church *militant*," in the Communion Service. These contests are the contests of the Spirit; and the victory is lost or won, in the heart.

own share of responsibility in calling infants to Christ's holy baptism, proceeds, in a most touching and affecting strain, to implore, on her own part, blessings upon the infant about to be baptized. She identifies herself with its welfare with all a mother's love, all a mother's care. Is *your* heart tremblingly alive to the success of all the measures you take for the worldly welfare of your child, she is not less quick in her anxious care that in this spiritual work also he may find a prosperous issue. In this, her act of solemn appointed duty [1], tender affection impels the anxious prayer, that nothing may, on her part, be wanting to prosper it; nothing, on her part, done to bar the benefits of it; but that grace may be given, by which alone the infant can be endued with heavenly virtues here, and everlastingly rewarded hereafter, through the mercy of her God. Mark, too, thou watchful mother! mark the care with which she implores the Almighty for his providential defence and his *continued* protection amid the varied changes and chances of this mortal life! He is the "blessed Lord God, who doth live and *govern all things*, world without end." To this supreme power, this unbounded mercy, this infinite and gracious love, she makes her appeal on behalf of your dear, unconscious infant; for in his welfare she now claims a share. Nor can the minister repeat the supplication without himself individually sharing this deep and holy interest in your infant's spiritual welfare. He also, as his lips

[1] It was the command of the risen Saviour himself, that his Church should go forth among all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. *xxviii. 19.*

utter the words—"by *our* office and ministry"—is tremblingly alive to the responsibility under which he executes that holy office, and performs the sacred duties of that ministry. He feels his own unworthiness. His whole heart therefore breathes a prayer, not only that no imperfection, no unworthiness which clings to himself, may weaken the efficacy of his ministration, or lessen the authority of his office; but that Heaven's best blessing may rest on the infant, in time and in eternity. O what a bond of affection is thus early begun between youthful Christians and their pastor and guide! How wise thus, betimes, to lay the foundation of that holy and affectionate interest which should ever exist between ministers and their people!

Nor is this sympathy confined to parents, and sponsors, and ministers. The whole assembled congregation are made parties to the high and solemn service: they also join in the hopeful prayer for blessing, and to each supplication add their according—"AMEN." They rejoice that yet more souls are about to be added to the family of God here on earth, in the humble trust, that going on from strength to strength they may be made meet for their inheritance with the saints hereafter in heaven. Mutual love and charity are thus fostered. We must love those for whose spiritual welfare we pray. Christian faith, in its enlarged sense, comprises Christian charity. Good-will to man goes hand in hand with glory to God, and we thus pledge ourselves to bear into life that love and kindliness of heart towards men, which is the appointed proof of our discipleship with Christ.

THE PRAYER.

"Almighty and everlasting God .... through Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE Church, however, before she finally admits the infant to baptism, pours forth the earnest prayer of faith for a special blessing on the work in which she is engaged; the prayer being framed in a full spirit of Christian humility, yet regulated by that firm and courageous reliance upon the promised aid of Heaven, which is at once her defence and her glory. She states, with peculiar solemnity, the grounds upon which her hope rests, that the work to which you are called is a reasonable service, and will be blessed of Him at whose bidding you engage in it. The death of the Saviour, with some of the sad and painful particulars which attended it, is vividly brought to your recollection as a type of baptism; wherein is represented "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." This view of the holy ordinance is taken from the striking monition of St. Paul to the Romans, — "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized unto Christ Jesus, were baptized unto his death[1]?" The apostle thus teaching us, that we, in this service, pledge ourselves to be crucified with Christ, as to the affections and lusts, that we may be also glorified with Him. Now, since this sacrifice on his part was offered "for the forgiveness of our sins," it is well pleaded before Almighty God as the ground on which we rest our hope of being heard favourably. Further, the Church encourages your work, by the

[1] Romans vi. 3.

eration that it is done in obedience to the posi-
ommand of the Redeemer himself, who, when
ıtrusted to his Church, for ever, authority to
all nations unto Him by the holy rite of bap-
vouchsafed to give the exact form of words by
the admission into covenant with Him should
de. Thus at the very outset of our course, as
ers of Christ, we are taught the paramount ne-
y of unity; in order that the family of God upon
should, as regenerate children, be knit together
bond of peace—"all speaking the same thing;"
ıere is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one
and Father of all [1]." Thus confirming your
as you bring your child to Christ's holy baptism,
prayer ascends to the throne of grace hopefully.
cannot doubt but that the outward and visible
ıf baptism, adopted as it is by Divine command,
ıe so sanctified, that the inward and spiritual
will be fully and richly vouchsafed; and that
loved "child, now to be baptized therein, will
e the fulness of God's grace, and ever remain in
umber of his faithful and elect children, through
Christ our Lord." At the same time there is,
ghout this prayer, an admirable Christian con-
ıcy. It is offered in hope: it is offered also in
ity. It shows that you rejoice in the promised
ng of election to life: it shows also that you
t to hold the privileges of that election only so
as its conditions be fulfilled; and that you look
ower to fulfil them only to the grace of God.

[1] 1 Cor. i. 10; Ephes. iv. 5.

All your dependence is upon Him; through the sole merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Name this child."

At this part of the service it is appointed that the child be named. One name we have by birthright; that of our family: reminding us that we are children of Adam, and partakers of his fallen nature. We now receive another name, called our *Christian* name; for it is given upon our admission into the family of God, through Jesus *Christ*. In this view of the ordinance it is, that godfathers and godmothers—*not* the parents—declare by what new, or Christian, name the child is henceforth to be designated. When the sponsors have declared the name, the minister proceeds to consecrate the child to God's service, and, addressing it by the name of its adoption, baptizes it "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost[1]." This form is sanctified, being appointed by

[1] You will observe, that in the rubrics, or special directions for rightly ordering her services, the Church directs children to be baptized, either by dipping into water or being sprinkled with it. This alternative is permitted, because, though in the earlier ages of Christianity, particularly in the country of the East, immersion was generally adopted; yet even then it was not universal: and as in cold climates like our own, the practice would frequently be attended with injury to the variable constitution of children, and sometimes even with loss of life, sprinkling is adopted. And this is perfectly consistent with the religion of Christ. Life and health are God's pre-

our blessed Lord himself. The time and manner also which marked its delivery, stamp it with peculiar solemnity. It was the last injunction of the risen Saviour, wherein he declared the mode by which the Church, after his ascension, was to be built up, a holy temple; a Church, uniform in its faith and hope—a spiritual temple, holy to the Lord and honourable: that all men, believing the same Lord—the Trinity in unity; three persons and one only God—might be complete in obedience as in faith; feel their high privilege as members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; and by thus giving to God's sacred name the honour due, fearlessly confess *Him* before men, who will one day remember and confess his faithful servants, when, before men and angels, there be none other to help them, "but only Thou, O Lord!"

The form itself conveys varied instruction. It denotes, that we are baptized by the authority of that great Being who is the Creator and Father of all, the Redeemer of all, the Sanctifier of all. As the Father, He wills that his offending children be reconciled; as the Redeemer, He offers himself to be their reconciliation; as the Sanctifier, He renews them in their once forfeit holiness. Thus brought into subjection to this holy name, we are to consider ourselves

thus gifts, and are not to be hazarded by the observance of any external rite in our religious worship. The outward act of sprinkling represents with sufficient clearness, though by a figure, the internal and spiritual benefit. Seeing, too, that the act derives its value from the spiritual benediction bestowed upon it, that act is deemed sufficient, which fully represents the institution. The Church, therefore, allows either form to be used; wisely considering, that "mercy is better than sacrifice."

henceforth not our own, but his: sealed as his possession, and henceforth subject to his will. — Faith in this glorious Trinity in Unity is also thus implied to be the condition of sharing the blessings which each Person of the Godhead is free to bestow. If we would have fellowship with God the Father, we must gain it through the Son; but it can be gained only through the Son, as God; able by his divine power, equal with the Father, to effect so marvellous a work. And even when reconciled, there is one only power which can continue to us the blessing of this reconciliation; and that is, God the Holy Ghost; who, by his supreme sanctifying power, can alone so renovate what from day to day decays of our regenerated nature, as that we may continue God's for ever. By Faith in this holy name we become of the family of God; and are to be known from the rest of the world by believing in the Holy Trinity in Unity; Three Persons and One God. Thus early is this great fundamental truth laid down, as that on which Christianity rests. All depends upon it. It is the foundation on which the whole superstructure of the Christian faith is raised; whilst the ordinance on which it is stamped, is the appointed means whereby is conveyed to his creatures the love of God our heavenly Father; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ his Son, God and man; and the fellowship of God the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. To cavil at the simplicity of the means, as an outward sign of an inward grace, would be to share the error of Naaman, and subject ourselves to the mortifying remonstrance which he felt so deeply, and at length acted upon so effectually. "If the prophet had bid

thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith to thee—Wash, and be clean[1]?"

ADMISSION INTO THE CHURCH.

YOUR child having been thus admitted to baptism, according to Christ's holy ordinance, and agreeably to his prescribed form of words; having also then taken

[1] What if the child, spiritually new-born, be unconscious as a child of God, of the cleansing of the Spirit? he is equally unconscious when his body is cleansed by the washing of water as a new-born child of Adam *. But suppose him conscious of the gift of grace, then, as we humbly trust, vouchsafed, the gift would still be free, and without reference to any goodness of his own. St. Paul reasons this point with even unusual force and clearness in his address to Titus. Tit. iii. 5. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The Jewish converts, who, from the history of their own nation, were familiar with the notion of God's revealing his will to man by some or other outward sign or symbol, without difficulty received, in their evident meaning, the terms—"washing of regeneration"—and "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." They understood by this "regeneration," a placing the person baptized in a new relation towards God, both as to duties and privileges: and the "renovation" they understood to be the continual work of God's grace in renewing the powers of spiritual life which were liable to continual decay: a work analogous to the continual exercise of divine providence in renewing the powers of bodily life, which also are liable to continual decay. Strength is thus daily renewed for the fulfilment of our duties, and consolation daily renewed for the soothing of our sorrow. Hence the common terms by which the Apostles designated the early converts to Christianity were those of "regenerate"—"new-born"—"born again."

---

* See page 72.

a new name—a Christian name—in token of its new relations to God through Christ; the minister, as a steward in the family of God, doth solemnly receive it as one of that happy number. And for a further guarding against faithlessness in time to come—either from forgetfulness of the covenant now entered into, its obligations and its privileges, or from fear of confessing the Lord Jesus Christ before men in seasons of persecution and trial — the Church, adopting a common Eastern custom, signs the baptized infant "with the sign of the cross; in *token* that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified." Nor is the precaution needless. Many and various will be the temptations to this shame. On this point our Lord has left us an impressive warning. He assures us, that at the bar of final judgment, not only will He reject, as unknown to Him, the wicked and profane, the infidel and the hypocrite, but that "whosoever shall be ashamed of Him and of his words in this generation, of them will *He* be ashamed *then*." Is it not, therefore, well that the mind be guarded early against a fear of shame, which may ruin the soul for ever? For we must bear in mind that it is not only in the fiery times of persecution that men are tempted to fall off from their stedfastness. Nay, those stirring times have not unfrequently called forth from quiet hearts and gentle spirits the noblest courage in meeting death, and the steadiest fortitude in enduring the pangs of it. These too are occasional trials only. It is the laugh of the cold hearted, the despitefulness of the proud, the sneer of the contemptuous, which are *continually* tempting men, and continually striving to

move them from their stedfastness. To encourage us under such trials, the Son of God himself deigned to endure, not only death, but those cruel mockings and revilings, that bitter scorn and contumely which, to his holy soul, must have been harder than death. When, however, we remember our distinctive mark and badge, as followers of the Crucified; servants of a despised Master, disciples of a persecuted Lord; we remember, that being our example as well as our sacrifice; enduring the cross, despising the shame; He has thereby sanctified for ever the patient Christian who endures his own cross unrepiningly, however weighty; and who reconciles to himself his burden by rejoicing to do the will of God. For, why is it that men should be ashamed of Christ? They cannot be ashamed, because they are brought by Him into favour with God; there is surely no shame in being called the sons of God. No shame can attach to the expectation of a glorious and eternal inheritance in the kingdom of heaven! It is, that the believer in Christ crucified, when he takes up his cross, and bears his trials, as Christ did, must be crucified as to the affections and lusts: the pride and shame of this world must be dead within him; with the fear of man's hatred, and the love of man's praise. There must be a death unto sin: whether of such as the heart secretly cherisheth, or such as the world would lure to. In a high estate, therefore, lofty imaginations must be cast down; and all *trust* in wealth, power, or learning, put aside. In a low estate, the spirit of the Christian must not fail him; faith in a lowly Saviour — and low indeed was the Saviour

ADDRESS.

"Seeing now, dearly . . . . . to this beginning."

THE whole tenor of this service is strikingly humble. The minister reminds you, that whatever benefits may accrue from this holy ordinance—*here*, the privileges of sonship with God; *hereafter*, the hope of a heavenly inheritance—all are to be received as the free gift of Divine grace, and to be acknowledged with due gratitude. Nor for a moment is the presumptuous thought entertained, that in this act of baptism, there can be an irrespective assurance of salvation. The baptized now—like the elect, God's people of old—will forfeit these blessings if they forfeit their allegiance [1]. They must go on in holiness if they would make their calling and election sure. Were the ordinance itself to be considered salvation, why the earnest exhortation to pray Almighty God, that by the power of his grace your child may be enabled to *continue* in the strait and narrow way of life, wherein you have now "placed him;" and may "lead the *rest* of his life according to this beginning?" The very prayer for Divine grace to *preserve* to him the inestimable blessing of this new spiritual relation with God, implies that it may be *lost*: teaching us, whilst we trust hopefully, that we are not to trust presumptuously; but must remember, that if we would continue to share the blessings of our baptismal covenant, we must continue to fulfil the conditions of it. The Christian's work is never finished till he find the repose of

[1] See Deut. xxxviii. 58, 59.

the grave: his warfare never accomplished, till time be lost in eternity. Blessed be his work, if it "bring him peace at the last." And here again, with how rapid a glance is your mind carried forward through the long perspective of the years your child may number ere that "last" may come! With what anxious feeling do you ponder, as to that "rest of his life," upon which, as it is led "*according to* this beginning," or with a *disregard* to it, depends his eternity of bliss or of woe! The thought is one which must touch the hearts of all the congregation; minister, sponsors, and people: how deeply it must sink into *yours*, mothers alone can feel.

When the Church thus certifies you of your child's baptismal regeneration, she does so in faith. She believes that when the risen Saviour, about to ascend into heaven till the restitution of all things, did institute this holy ordinance, with the most marked solemnity, and vouchsafing even the special form of its administration, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—no mere form was intended, but sure blessing. Would the compassionate Saviour mock the hopes of his fallen creatures, by bidding them do, as a solemn act and service, that which were no help to their salvation? Would He bid you enter your child into the family of God the Father, pledged to the duties of sonship, yet withhold the means of fulfilling them? Would He claim faith in his own name, as the Son of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, yet leave the soul unaided in holding fast that faith? Would he bid you seek the communion of the Holy Ghost, yet withhold the gift of its sanctification and comfort? True! great is

this mystery of godliness! But if our spiritual birth be a mystery, is not our natural birth equally a mystery? It is God's will that the infant have bodily life: it is God's gift that it have bodily powers to expand into action as life advances. Shall man presume to doubt that the same omnipotent Will, and the same gracious bounty will give to the soul the means for exercising spiritual powers as spiritual life shall require them. To refuse assent to this, because we cannot comprehend it, would be folly. St. Paul, with great justice, reminds us, that we are of no more power to comprehend the Nature of God our Creator than the clay, moulded by the potter's hand, can grasp the skill of the potter who forms and fashions it. Rather, we shall find it consistent with the whole mystery of godliness to believe, that by the love of the Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, the powers of a new and spiritual life are vouchsafed; though at this, his new birth, the infant is as unconscious of *these* powers as he is, at his natural birth, of his bodily powers[1]. Remember then, for your comfort, that as Christ himself commanded this union with the holy name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we should be justly held unreasonable not to believe that the fruits of such union must be the love of the Father, into whose family your child is thus admitted; the love of the Son, who thus invites him to be a "fellow-heir" with Him of his kingdom; and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, to bear witness with our spirit that we

[1] The analogy thus suggested by the very term—a new birth—is continually referred to throughout this service. Indeed it pervades every part of it.

are the children of God. The Church, therefore, offers thanks to God on this occasion in no presumptuous spirit, but simply in an unreserved faith upon the divine word: believing that he who thus is called to blessing, will be blessed; and assured that the love of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as it will not be withheld on this occasion, so it must prove efficacious.

In further proof of the humble spirit by which the Church is actuated when she encourages you to hope divine blessing upon baptismal regeneration, and in that hope, to offer up your prayers and supplications for future continual support to the newly adopted child of God, she considers no language of her own sufficiently holy, wherewith to express her lowly spirit, her anxious hope, her earnest desire: she therefore, in approaching the throne of grace, adopts that appointed form of words, which the Saviour, who knowing all our wants, and compassionating our manifold infirmities in prayer, did himself teach us; and which none ever offered from the heart, and offered in vain. Indeed, if any prayer might reach Him who delighteth to hear and answer prayer, *that* which his blessed Son himself did frame, surely must prevail. Accordingly, you, and the sponsors, and all the congregation join in offering up the Lord's Prayer. Nor can it fail, but that your reflections upon each petition, as they are, one by one, offered, will take their character from the occasion before you; and be specially applied to implore the peculiar blessings of the ordinance itself, and to gain the gracious aid which a fulfilment of its duties requires.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LORD'S PRAYER [1].

"Our Father . . . . . deliver us from evil. Amen."

WHAT new reflections arise in your heart! As your lips utter "*Our* Father," your heart associates your child in every succeeding supplication of this beautiful prayer. It is addressed to the great Jehovah; into whose Name—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—your child is baptized: your God and *his* God; your Father and *his* Father. Often as you may have read, and dwelt upon the animating reflection of St. Paul, that the faithful in Christ Jesus are "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the *household* of God," you ponder with new interest this view of baptismal privileges, because those privileges are shared by the

[1] Such is the marvellous fulness of this prayer that we find it adapted to every age and every degree; guiding our minds aright under every variety of place, time, and circumstance which can mark man's chequered life. Alike to the most simple and the most learned it presents clear thoughts and appropriate language, wherewith they may approach the throne of grace worthily: whilst youth and age, strength and weakness, sickness and health, the living and the dying, alike rejoice in it. As often therefore as it occurs in the several services, I have suggested such reflections upon it as the particular occasion seemed to call forth: and if sometimes there appear a repetition in those reflections, I have rather hazarded that repetition than troubled the reader by a reference to any preceding notice of it.

It may perhaps excite surprise in the young Christian, that in this prayer there is no immediate and direct declaration of its being offered up in the name of Christ; though every Christian confesses, that all our prayers would be altogether unavailing save by the blood of Jesus Christ. Yet, virtually, we do so offer it when we offer the very words which that Redeemer did himself teach us. He therefore, the Giver of all good, is felt to be with us, aiding and assisting us: strengthening our minds and sanctifying our hearts.

loved infant, now, through Christ, a child of God by adoption and grace [1]. So again the stirring address of St. John recurs to you with a force unfelt before. —"Beloved, now are we the sons of God."—Never did you feel so powerfully this noble address of the beloved of the Lord; for now your own loved child is ranked among that happy number. He too is privileged, when by God's goodness his faculties shall expand with his growth, to address the Lord God Omnipotent in these gracious terms. It is his also *now* to cry, "Abba, *Father*." It is his also to repose under the care of a heavenly Father, whose power is supreme in heaven and in earth; and who in the plenitude of that power spreads his sheltering wing over all the children of his love.

And now this *name* you feel to be thrice *hallowed!* —that name, by being baptized into which your child is united to God — the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost:* infinite in power, infinite in mercy, infinite in love: by his power shielding the helpless one from harm, in his mercy cherishing little children and blessing them; in his love sanctifying them as his own for ever. So your heart prays. You feel also that on you, so long as life be spared, rests the bounden duty of leading the child's first

[1] Ephes. ii. 19. This remarkable comparison comes with great force from St. Paul. You will remember how jealously he contended for his privileges as a Roman citizen, when his civil rights were interfered with. He claimed them; and having his claim allowed, avoided both disgrace and punishment, Acts xxii. 25. Hence he would rouse the indifferent and the worldly to heed their covenanted privileges, as adopted citizens of the Church of Christ, that holy city of God, where the blessing of heavenly aid, if duly sought, is never sought in vain.

thoughts to know and honour the Name, into which it has been baptized: for well are you aware, that if an almighty Father be our defence we shall not greatly fall; if an almighty Intercessor be our advocate, we cannot pray in vain; if an almighty Spirit be our comforter, there can be no despair. And how tenderly alive you are for your child, that these, so great blessings, be *his*, you yourself can best tell.

In your child's name how fervently do you pray of this God — "*Thy kingdom come!*" Your child has been enrolled a soldier and servant of Christ; bound to aid in establishing the authority of this kingdom, to extend its dominion, and himself be faithful and obedient to its laws. Methinks, ere you send him to fight this fight of faith, your maternal care will look well that he be duly armed thereto. You will arm him with the whole armour of God [1]; and as the hour of his warfare approaches, you will, from time to time, direct his attention to the uses for which it is adapted. You will teach him to buckle on the shield of faith and the breast-plate of righteousness; to fit on the helmet of salvation: and as you put into his hands the sword of the Spirit — *the Word* — you will well counsel him, to use it boldly, but warily; courageously, but meekly; because in this warfare he is to march, shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. High courage and a gentle spirit must go hand in hand to gain the victory; and where they are united, they are invincible. The sword [2] — the Word — so

[1] Ephes. vi. 11.

[2] A mother will teach her child, by easy converse, that these expressions, though taken from worldly warfare, are of clear spiritual application. Thus, suppose some cunning enemy of religion argues

wielded, cuts off every false argument, lays open every subtlety, removes every obstacle; and whilst it is powerful to overthrow the strongholds of worldly pride and vain philosophy, gives to the heart of him who wields it, a calm courage, which no dangers can subdue; and a feeling of heavenly safety, which no terror can alarm, no doubts weaken, nor death itself shake. "Grant then, O Father"—such is your mental prayer—"Grant that my child may so receive into his heart the laws of thy spiritual kingdom, and so practise them, that he come at last to thy heavenly kingdom, and serve thee there for ever."

That your child, as a soldier of the cross, may the

against it with a skill, which the humble Christian cannot refute by argument in return. He then presents his faith. "It is *God's* Word; I *believe* God, though I may not comprehend Him; and I trust to the truth of his Word, though I am not able to answer your arguments, or cope with your worldly learning. Truth in Christ is salvation; therefore I believe Him, and his Word, rather than you and your arguments." So when, as it often may happen, your good is evil spoken of, your actions perverted, and your motives maligned, you must not be moved from your stedfastness; you must not do evil that good may come; you must put on the breast-plate of righteousness; arming yourself with the breast-plate of a righteous conscience before men, and before God with the righteousness of Christ the Lord. Again, as the helmet guards the head, so salvation being the recompence of fidelity, right reason claims the honour due unto its God, from the learned and the wise, as well as from the poor and simple. No wit or learning can deny but that religion, offering to men the *greatest* good—even everlasting happiness—justly demands their highest care; being the one thing, above all others, needful; and reasonably appeals, as well to the exalted in wisdom, as to the lowly and the unlearned. Thus the young and the unlearned Christian will find "the Word" sufficient to beat down every argument, and remove every objection. Practise therefore your child in this armour of God, even as the warrior teaches the youthful soldier to use skilfully the weapon of his warfare.

more unshrinkingly fight the good fight of faith, you will further pray—"*Thy will be done on earth*," by us, "*as it is in heaven*," by thine angels; habitually, reverentially, devotedly. You know well the difficulty of yourself *thus* doing the will of God; and you look with an anxiety, which faith only can calm, to the years when your now smiling infant will be called to do that Will—often in difficulties, sometimes in sorrow and pain, always with fidelity. You strengthen yourself by remembering that He who taught us to offer the petition, himself first fulfilled the duty it involves—fulfilled it to the uttermost. Witness his memorable words, in the moment of surpassing agony—"O my Father! if it be possible, let this cup—this afflictive trial—pass from me; *nevertheless*, *not* as *I* will, *but* as *thou* wilt[1]." Now, remember that this Being had been baptized of water and of the Spirit; that He had deigned, for our example, to accept the aid of the Spirit when He went to the trial of his faith in the wilderness; that prayer for the Spirit was the habit of his life, continually. Say, then, can you doubt but that to your child, now baptized of water and the Spirit, according to Christ's holy ordinance, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — can you doubt but to this child also, when his heart shall have learned the duty of prayer, there will be vouchsafed strength in time of need, to do the will of the same heavenly Father—sustained in every season of spiritual trial, and comforted in every season of spiritual sorrow. And surely, if aught of earthly service might harmonize with angel-worship, it might be

[1] Matt. xxvi. 39.

when infant hands are clasped in prayer to the God alike of angels and of men: with upraised look, imploring the help of their heavenly Father to make them good, and dutiful, and submissive; trained by youthful piety for an age of honour, and disciplined by a life of obedience on earth for an eternity of happiness in heaven.

So, when you pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread*," you offer the prayer for your child also. Specially do you petition for spiritual food, day by day, to sustain his new and spiritual life: for true it is, that man "liveth not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And has your heavenly Father ever failed to supply "food convenient" for his creatures? support adapted to their exigencies? Witness the manna in the wilderness, angels' food, bread sent from heaven! Witness the spiritual manna, the bread of life eternal, which came down from heaven! You pray therefore hopefully: you are sure that God will never fail that which is expedient for soul or for body; and you trust for daily supply to meet the daily wants of both. Thus your child will be reminded by you, not to suppose that because he has been baptized into the Spirit, therefore his work is done, and he is already perfect in Christ Jesus! God forbid! He must continually seek fresh supplies of grace, to meet his spiritual growth, ere he "come unto a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ[1]." For exactly as bodily life, at the natural

[1] Ephes. iv. 13. See pages 68 and 91. This view of our baptismal privileges and their conditions cannot be too strongly or too frequently impressed upon the mind of the young Christian.

more unshrinkingly fight the good fight of faith, you will further pray—"*Thy will be done on earth*," by us, "*as it is in heaven*," by thine angels; habitually, reverentially, devotedly. You know well the difficulty of yourself *thus* doing the will of God; and you look with an anxiety, which faith only can calm, to the years when your now smiling infant will be called to do that Will —often in difficulties, sometimes in sorrow and pain, always with fidelity. You strengthen yourself by remembering that He who taught us to offer the petition, himself first fulfilled the duty it involves—fulfilled it to the uttermost. Witness his memorable words, in the moment of surpassing agony—"O my Father! if it be possible, let this cup—this afflictive trial—pass from me; *nevertheless*, *not* as *I* will, *but* as *thou* wilt[1]." Now, remember that this Being had been baptized of water and of the Spirit; that He had deigned, for our example, to accept the aid of the Spirit when He went to the trial of his faith in the wilderness; that prayer for the Spirit was the habit of his life, continually. Say, then, can you doubt but that to your child, now baptized of water and the Spirit, according to Christ's holy ordinance, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — can you doubt but to this child also, when his heart shall have learned the duty of prayer, there will be vouchsafed strength in time of need, to do the will of the same heavenly Father—sustained in every season of spiritual trial, and comforted in every season of spiritual sorrow. And surely, if aught of earthly service might harmonize with angel-worship, it might be

[1] Matt. xxvi. 39.

when infant hands are clasped in prayer to the God alike of angels and of men: with upraised look, imploring the help of their heavenly Father to make them good, and dutiful, and submissive; trained by youthful piety for an age of honour, and disciplined by a life of obedience on earth for an eternity of happiness in heaven.

So, when you pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread*," you offer the prayer for your child also. Specially do you petition for spiritual food, day by day, to sustain his new and spiritual life: for true it is, that man "liveth not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And has your heavenly Father ever failed to supply "food convenient" for his creatures? support adapted to their exigencies? Witness the manna in the wilderness, angels' food, bread sent from heaven! Witness the spiritual manna, the bread of life eternal, which came down from heaven! You pray therefore hopefully: you are sure that God will never fail that which is expedient for soul or for body; and you trust for daily supply to meet the daily wants of both. Thus your child will be reminded by you, not to suppose that because he has been baptized into the Spirit, therefore his work is done, and he is already perfect in Christ Jesus! God forbid! He must continually seek fresh supplies of grace, to meet his spiritual growth, ere he "come unto a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ[1]." For exactly as bodily life, at the natural

[1] Ephes. iv. 13. See pages 68 and 91. This view of our baptismal privileges and their conditions cannot be too strongly or too frequently impressed upon the mind of the young Christian.

birth, though it be the free gift, and of the free will of God, must yet be sustained by "food which is convenient" for it, and which is appointed thereto of the *providence* of God; so spiritual life, at the spiritual birth, through the free gift of God in Christ Jesus, must be nourished and strengthened by the Word and Spirit, appointed thereto by the *grace* of God. As then you repeat the petition, "Give *us*"—how pleasing to think that your child will one day share your supplications, as now he is privileged to share your hopes.

In offering the next supplication for forgiveness of your own offences before God, the hope of gaining the blessing you ask is grounded upon the fulfilment of the correspondent and appropriate duty of conceding forgiveness to those who have offended you. And even here, as you pray, God "forgive *us*," and include your child in the petition, you must remember, that though he can have at present little to forgive or be forgiven, yet as years creep on, and with growing age circumstances present opportunity, he must both look to God to forgive him his sins, and be ready to forgive others their faults. You will train him to pass over little injuries which may arise with his young companions; teach him not quickly to take offence, but rather smother the first sparks of anger, and check the first outbreaks of a hasty temper; and if good opportunity present itself, begin by extending your forgiveness to his faults, in proportion as he is ready to forgive what he may fancy unjust or unkind towards himself from others. You will thus induce a habit of self-control, for which he will bless your *memory* with his latest breath. This is the more

important, as there is no occasion on which the pride of man more naturally rises against the will of God, than when injury stirs us up to resentment, and would fain blind us to the noble Christian duty of forgiveness—leaving vengeance to the God who claims it as his own[1]. Thus, in most gracious condescension to our infirmity, we are supplied with the strongest possible motive to forgive others, seeing we make forgiveness, on our own part, the condition on which we hopefully ask to be ourselves forgiven.

Under the same feelings you proceed to offer the remaining petition, which indeed is twofold. Here also, when the word "*us*" passes your lips, on *whom* chiefly rest your anxious thoughts?—True, whilst you hang over the smiling features of your unconscious infant, there seems no room for temptation to enter there[2]. Yet, as time progresses, the passions

[1] Rom. xii. 19. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Hence the Christian, whilst he trusts that crime will be punished by human laws, where their power can avail, leaves to the just vengeance of God the punishment of those offences which the laws of man cannot reach: and many are those offences. How often do the malicious and the envious, the backbiter and the slanderer wound the heart of the peaceful and the good, yet escape all just recompense in this world; save the wretched upbraidings of their own conscience, and the dreadful anticipation of that Divine anger, which, however delayed, is not less sure. Thus the faithful servant of Christ escapes the charge, either of enmity towards his enemy, on the one hand, or of indifference to sin on the other. He commits his cause unto the Lord, who judgeth right; and who, making the cause of the righteous his own, will repay the wicked to his face; but keep covenant and mercy with them that love Him.—Deut. vii. 9, 10.

[2] When the mother's watchful eye, quickened by affection, catches her sleeping infant's smile, she thinks how strange is the infant's world of joy; and haply cherishes an anxious wish that no sorrow

will awake; the world must be entered upon; the spiritual enemy will not rest; and this very Being, now so calm and unruffled by active evil, must stand forth, and endure, as a soldier of the cross, such trials as it may please his great Captain to call him to. He must be *proved*, whether he be faithful or no; whether he will welcome sinful thoughts or reject them; whether he will resist the Devil, or yield. And, as with all a mother's quick fear for the future, you bear your thoughts onward, and array before you the varied temptations to which your child may in after-life be exposed in his probation, it is with no lack of earnestness you implore your heavenly Father, that for you *both*, there may be deliverance — that whether your child be tried by the sorrows of the world or its allurements; tempted to unholy murmuring in the one case, to forgetfulness of God in the other; however tempted he be; your prayer is firmly offered up to his heavenly Father, that *He* would "deliver him from evil." And thus methinks you pour forth your supplication—"O heavenly Father, not for myself only, but for this loved one, I pray! O spare him, if so it please Thee; spare him severity of trial. I know, by my own heart, how weak our nature is. I know that help cometh alone of Thee. Be Thou at his right hand, as he passeth through his trials! Be Thou a very pre-

darken a joy so bright. She knows indeed the wish to be vain as it is anxious; a mere fond expectation. Yet who can wonder, that since the first act of the mind is to express love to a mother, a mother's love should stand pre-eminent? The Christian mother, therefore, since neither her affection can prevent sorrow, nor her care subdue it, does what in her lies to smooth the pathway of her child. She commits him to the care of Omniscience—of One, who can turn *sorrow into* joy, mourning into peace.

sent help in the needful time of trouble! Be Thou also his guide, and lead him in the path of safety. This I pray, by that holy Name, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in which he is now baptized, and by which he shares with your suppliant the covenanted mercy. O Father, save us for the glory of that Name: and since, through that Name, we are thine, and not our own, O "*deliver us from evil*," for thine own sake! So may mother and child, prepared here by thy grace, share together thy glory hereafter; for thine *is* the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen!"

PRAYER.

"We yield thee . . . . . through Christ our Lord."

HERE, as in the exhortation to praise, which followed immediately upon the infant's baptism, the Church evinces her characteristic wisdom in a union of the firmest faith with the most unfailing humility. Not daring to suppose that Jesus, the righteous, the holy, and the good, having appointed the ordinance, would withhold its appropriate blessing from those who should receive the same meekly and reverently, she proceeds upon the conviction, that God *has* regenerated this infant with his holy Spirit, *has* received him as his own child by adoption; and *has* incorporated him into his holy family, the Church. Not only does your own faith thus derive fresh strength, but your soul pour forth its thanksgivings with deeper humility, from the fresh feeling thus excited of your own unworthiness and spiritual destitution, when compared with the riches of God's grace, and the abundance of his

mercy vouchsafed to you. Well may we all declare the goodness of the Lord, and praise him for his lovingkindness! Nor does the Church confine herself, on this occasion, to the mere expression of thanks for mercies received. She earnestly implores a continuance of grace to sustain the new life upon which the spiritually new-born infant opens: and she thus conveys most powerful and salutary instruction. Since regeneration is the being "dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness," and being spiritually "buried with Christ in his death," to God you look for grace to continue in this state. It is *He*, who alone can enable even the regenerate to crucify the old man; that is, destroy all unrighteousness, all unholiness [1]; till none be left in the heart, and the whole body of sin, which by nature would live there, be by grace slain, or abolished [2]. It is He, by whose continual aid you trust, that thus figuratively partaking of the death of Christ, the baptized infant may, figuratively, be partaker of his resurrection—raised from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. So do you unreservedly confess that baptism, whilst it is the appointed door of entrance into life, is no security against falling; for though new-born in baptism, man may become degenerate, unless the life correspond with the birth, and the child of God go on to do his Father's will. Your prayer, thus offered, is offered

[1] If it be true, as St. Paul tells us, Ephes. iv. 24, that "The new man is created in righteousness and true holiness," the converse must hold good, that "The old man continues unrighteous and unholy."

[2] So St. Paul expresses the utter overthrow of sin by the power of the cross, Ephes. ii. 16, declaring of Christ Jesus, who is our *reconciliation* with God, that He hath "slain the enmity thereby."

hopefully; that your child may go on from strength to strength, till from spiritual life here, it pass to eternal life hereafter, and, for the sole merits of the gracious Redeemer, share his kingdom and his glory.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EXHORTATION.

"Forasmuch as this child . . . . godliness of living."

At the close of this service, we find the Church acting with her wonted care to establish the truth, and guarding against any false impression being left upon the minds of the congregation, as to the nature of baptismal regeneration—the extent of its duties, and the fulness of its privileges. She *repeats* her instruction, and *reminds* us that baptism, whilst it admits the baptized into the family of God, demands a new and holy life correspondent to that state; that whilst it gives us the Communion of the Holy Spirit, it demands holy conduct, in testimony of such companionship; that whilst it seals us with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, heirs with Him of a heavenly inheritance; we continue thus privileged only so long as we are active in well doing; "following his example, and being made like unto Him." There is to be no careless indifference as to our actions, because, being regenerate, we are to live by faith. The conditions of enjoying the blessings of our holy baptism are the fulfilment of its holy duties—we "add to

our faith, virtue." He who has been baptized must no more be moved by the power of sin, than the body, when dead, is sensible to any outward agency. He is spiritually to die unto sin, as Christ died in the body. Again, as Christ rose from the dead, so his followers are to rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; to a new life[1]: power thereto being vouchsafed by the Spirit now given. We are also well reminded that this is a daily and continual work. The regenerated is not to be watchful to-day and careless to-morrow — not abstaining from some sins only, and yielding to others—not fancying that he has attained perfection, and needs no striving—that he has gained assurance, and need fear no falling! He is *continually* to struggle against the evil of his nature, and, by the assistance of God's grace, mortify all such evil and corrupt affections, as in our fallen nature still strive against us. Against these we, like St. Paul, shall have to fight to the last, though grace may give at last the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. And whilst thus the service closes with earnestly insisting upon active holiness—a constant fulfilment of holy duties, commensurate with our holy privileges, and rendered possible by holy aid—the means by which, under God's blessing upon them, such a course of life is within reach, are stated with equal plainness and force. The Church, remembering the Divine precept, that we "train up a child in the way that he should go," first expects that he be early instructed in the nature of that holy ordinance into which he was admitted into covenant with God, even though then all uncon-

[1] See page 68, and 2 Cor. iv. 16.

cious of the service in which he was engaged; pecially enjoins that the infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, the nature and extent of "this solemn vow, promise, and profession," as a Christian. A mother, therefore, when she perceives the infant's mind to expand, and its powers of apprehension to strengthen, will explain *why* he must curb bad tempers, check anger, and hatred, and envy, and all unkindness. She will tell him that such are the works of the Devil, which he is bound by his solemn vow to renounce. She will then lead him to exercise a gentle and tractable spirit, obedient to his parents, kind towards all; because, as he believes in God, he must live as always under the eye of a Being, to whom are known the very secrets of the heart; and who will reward the good, and punish the wicked.[1] She will further train him to seek the love and favour of his heavenly Father by public and private prayer; to serve Him, not in word only, but in deed; doing always what may please a good and gracious God. And she will find various modes of facilitating this instruction. If he attend the services of the Church, and be led to give such attention, as his young mind is capable of, to the sermon there heard, she may trust, that gradually much instruction will be gained[1]. True, in the sermon, man speaks, yet he speaks as of the oracles of God; and in God's service, and to God's

[1] Acting upon the counsel thus given by the Church, it will be your care, not only to take your child with you to the house of God, where he may hear sermons, but you will encourage him to give attention *there*, by enquiries *at home* afterwards, as to what he may remember of the sermon—yourself recalling to him such parts as may be most within his comprehension.

honour: and however his work be, as the apostle designates it, "the *foolishness* of preaching," it is one of the appointed means of saving souls. But home-instruction must be added. You will teach your child "the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments." In the *Creed*, he will gain a fuller knowledge of the great Creator, as the Christians' God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost[1]. That his first prayer should be "the *Lord's Prayer*," is wisely directed; because if any words might prevail for blessing, surely *they* will not fail, which the Lord himself did frame for us. But faith in God, with prayer, naturally leads to obedience. He will therefore learn, and impress upon his memory, the *Ten Commandments*; which, written by the finger of God, were, and are, and ever must be obligatory upon every man[2]. In carrying out these great first principles of faith and practice, you will avail yourself of every opportunity of inculcating the performance of such other relative and social duties as may spring from them; and teach, to the best of your power, whatever else may advance your child in the attainment of that wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation; reminding him never to rest satisfied with his advance in Christian graces, but, like St. Paul and others, the holy men of old[3], "still *go on* unto perfection"—still look

[1] See observations, in a subsequent page, upon the Creed, in the Catechism.

[2] This law—the *moral* law—our Saviour came, *not* to destroy, but to *fulfil*. The law, which He *annulled*, and the worthlessness of which the apostle speaks of, is the *ceremonial* law, or law of works, as a *ground of justification*.

[3] It thus appears that according to the truly evangelical view of baptismal regeneration, taken by the Church, one who is regenerated,

forward to his home in heaven. Thus wisely does the Church, at the conclusion of this service, *again* declare the nature of baptismal regeneration—divesting the doctrine of the new birth of all unconditional benefits; allowing no saving faith therein irrespectively of active holiness; insisting upon a stringent responsibility in the baptized, that being children of God by grace,

born anew of water and the Holy Ghost, and admitted into the family of God in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, according to the express words, and in the express manner laid down by Jesus Christ himself—is not so placed that he cannot fall; but is so placed by this, his new relation to God, that he walks in the Spirit—he is encouraged to ask for the Spirit—he is certified of the assistance of the Spirit—he follows the motions of the Spirit, either to save him from falling or to raise him up. The Spirit is continually his counsellor and comforter; enabling him to eschew the evils which he solemnly vowed to renounce; to believe the truth, to which he has pledged his faith; to do the work of righteousness, to which he has solemnly bound himself. And this view of man's regenerate state is that which the most eminent servants of Christ have themselves, in all ages, ever held. Among other instances occurs one, in which testimony to the fact is given indirectly, therefore the more strikingly. I allude to "the venerable and truly apostolic Swartz," as his biographer styles him *. How humbly did he adopt the watchful spirit urged upon God's children by the warning voice of St. Paul! "Thinking to stand fast," what heed did he take "not to fall?" If any servant of Christ might have relaxed a watchful care over his own heart; if any might have safely pursued his own way; any have stood in their security; it had been he. Yet mark his confession, that regenerate though he were, "daily did he require to be *renewed* by that Spirit of grace into which he had been baptized—daily was the Spirit his guide and monitor. God "has supported me, *day by day*, in the most gracious manner: He has instructed and *reproved* me by his Spirit: He has never left me without consolation."

---

* See Dean Pearson's interesting and instructive Life of Swartz, vol. i. p. 129, 3rd ed.

they "purify themselves even as he is pure[1];" and whilst they gratefully cherish in their hearts the love of God their heavenly Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ their blessed Redeemer, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost their promised Comforter, take heed that their faith, as regenerate, be a living principle, fruitful in good fruits; and themselves bound, undeterred by danger, unsubdued by toil, "*daily* to proceed in all virtue and godliness of living."

Thus the Church, with a maternal anxious care like your own, and aware how important to the soul's welfare it is that the noblest and highest springs of human thought and action should be of a purity and fulness, which no turbid streams of earth shall alloy or diminish, inculcates the union of a rational faith and an active piety; free alike from the daring of a bold and irrespective assurance on the one hand, and a reckless indifference, as to grace, on the other.

Hence it is, that you derive strength and encouragement for your work. Methinks, as you hang over your infant, when first after his baptism you watch his sleeping hours, new and happier thoughts crowd into your heart respecting him. Not only have you solemnly dedicated him to the service of Almighty God, now *his* heavenly Father, but you feel that he is, soul and body, under the special care of the same powerful and gracious Being, who, as you humbly trust, will for his own great Name and honour's sake save and defend *him*; as you gratefully remember that he has hitherto preserved you. And what, though the infant be unconscious of this new, spiritual birth, let me

[1] 1 John iii. 3.

again remind you, that neither was he conscious of his natural birth [1]. Indeed our blessed Lord, by this comparison, has given an illustration so apt, that your faith strengthens, and your hope brightens, and you go on your way rejoicing. You resolve, by God's grace assisting you, not to be wanting on your part. You give all diligence to provide due nourishment for his spiritual life, even as you think no labour wearisome, no self-denial hard, no pains lost, which may enable you to provide things needful for his bodily life. Nor will you for a moment be discouraged, because the infant may not yet value or comprehend this your maternal care. You persevere. You reflect, that as at the natural birth there is an evil principle born with the infant, of which he is then unconscious, and that time must elapse ere he can be acted upon by it; so at the second, or spiritual birth by grace—the *new* birth—reason itself gratefully accepts the assurance of a holy principle, then engrafted; even though in this case also the infant be unconscious of the powers implanted in him, and as yet incapable of exercising them. But if there be any period in the life of fallen man when it might be permitted us without presumption to hope, that the Holy Spirit of God would vouchsafe to dwell in the heart, and abide there, it would be *then*; in the years of infancy; when no wilful sin can have been added to original sin, and when the soul is yet free from any wilful offence against its God. Nor can you tell the extent of blessing which thus may follow your child during his passage through the troubles and difficulties of a world of trial. How many trace to the

[1] John iii. 7. See the note, page 99.

abiding feeling of religion, impressed upon their minds by a *mother's* wise instruction on these points in *early* life, a principle of rectitude which, in after years, has given a firmness in seasons of temptation, and a comfort in the hour of sorrow, which no severity of trial has had power to weaken, or disturb.

There was one, who wandered far and long; an outcast and a fugitive: friendless and destitute. None knew the bitterness of his cup, though none had drunk deeper of sorrow. None more quick than he to feel injury and injustice; yet revenge he scorned, and indignation he rose above. His fame and honour were assailed and blackened; yet he pursued his course unmoved, in the calm dignity of conscious integrity. He had from his earliest years cherished the blessed truth, that by covenant he was a child of God; consequently under the loving protection of a heavenly Father. His mother's image and his mother's teaching were in his heart! He remembered also the noble bearing of the Christian hero, to whose character she had so often drawn his thoughts; who, "though troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, cast down, was neither despairing nor forsaken[1]." This example of St. Paul, presented to him in the days of childhood, by the care of his mother, and held up for imitation by her animated expression of admiration at such heroic constancy, had been indelibly impressed upon his mind; and the voice which uttered those praises, still seemed, on every occasion of trial, to fall upon his ear in its own sweet accents of piety and love. His musings were of that minute and discri-

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 9.

loved infant, now, through Christ, a child of God by adoption and grace [1]. So again the stirring address of St. John recurs to you with a force unfelt before. —"Beloved, now are we the sons of God."—Never did you feel so powerfully this noble address of the beloved of the Lord; for now your own loved child is ranked among that happy number. He too is privileged, when by God's goodness his faculties shall expand with his growth, to address the Lord God Omnipotent in these gracious terms. It is his also now to cry, "Abba, *Father*." It is his also to repose under the care of a heavenly Father, whose power is supreme in heaven and in earth; and who in the plenitude of that power spreads his sheltering wing over all the children of his love.

And now this *name* you feel to be thrice *hallowed!* —that name, by being baptized into which your child is united to God the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost:* infinite in power, infinite in mercy, infinite in love: by his power shielding the helpless one from harm, in his mercy cherishing little children and blessing them; in his love sanctifying them as his own for ever. So your heart prays. You feel also that on you, so long as life be spared, rests the bounden duty of leading the child's first

[1] Ephes. ii. 19. This remarkable comparison comes with great force from St. Paul. You will remember how jealously he contended for his privileges as a Roman citizen, when his civil rights were interfered with. He claimed them; and having his claim allowed, avoided both disgrace and punishment, Acts xxii. 25. Hence he would rouse the indifferent and the worldly to heed their covenanted privileges, as adopted citizens of the Church of Christ, that holy city of God, where the blessing of heavenly aid, if duly sought, is never sought in vain.

thoughts to know and honour the Name, into which it has been baptized: for well are you aware, that if an almighty Father be our defence we shall not greatly fall; if an almighty Intercessor be our advocate, we cannot pray in vain; if an almighty Spirit be our comforter, there can be no despair. And how tenderly alive you are for your child, that these, so great blessings, be *his*, you yourself can best tell.

In your child's name how fervently do you pray of this God — "*Thy kingdom come!*" Your child has been enrolled a soldier and servant of Christ; bound to aid in establishing the authority of this kingdom, to extend its dominion, and himself be faithful and obedient to its laws. Methinks, ere you send him to fight this fight of faith, your maternal care will look well that he be duly armed thereto. You will arm him with the whole armour of God [1]; and as the hour of his warfare approaches, you will, from time to time, direct his attention to the uses for which it is adapted. You will teach him to buckle on the shield of faith and the breast-plate of righteousness; to fit on the helmet of salvation: and as you put into his hands the sword of the Spirit — *the Word* — you will well counsel him, to use it boldly, but warily; courageously, but meekly; because in this warfare he is to march, shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. High courage and a gentle spirit must go hand in hand to gain the victory; and where they are united, they are invincible. The sword [2] — the Word — so

[1] Ephes. vi 11.

[2] A mother will teach her child, by easy converse, that these expressions, though taken from worldly warfare, are of clear spiritual application. Thus, suppose some cunning enemy of religion argues

wielded, cuts off every false argument, lays open every subtlety, removes every obstacle; and whilst it is powerful to overthrow the strongholds of worldly pride and vain philosophy, gives to the heart of him who wields it, a calm courage, which no dangers can subdue; and a feeling of heavenly safety, which no terror can alarm, no doubts weaken, nor death itself shake. "Grant then, O Father"—such is your mental prayer—"Grant that my child may so receive into his heart the laws of thy spiritual kingdom, and so practise them, that he come at last to thy heavenly kingdom, and serve thee there for ever."

That your child, as a soldier of the cross, may the

against it with a skill, which the humble Christian cannot refute by argument in return. He then presents his faith. "It is *God's* Word; I *believe* God, though I may not comprehend Him; and I trust to the truth of his Word, though I am not able to answer your arguments, or cope with your worldly learning. Truth in Christ is salvation; therefore I believe Him, and his Word, rather than you and your arguments." So when, as it often may happen, your good is evil spoken of, your actions perverted, and your motives maligned, you must not be moved from your stedfastness; you must not do evil that good may come; you must put on the breast-plate of righteousness; arming yourself with the breast-plate of a righteous conscience before men, and before God with the righteousness of Christ the Lord. Again, as the helmet guards the head, so salvation being the recompence of fidelity, right reason claims the honour due unto its God, from the learned and the wise, as well as from the poor and simple. No wit or learning can deny but that religion, offering to men the *greatest* good even everlasting happiness—justly demands their highest care; being the one thing, above all others, needful; and reasonably appeals, as well to the exalted in wisdom, as to the lowly and the unlearned. Thus the young and the unlearned Christian will find "the Word" sufficient to beat down every argument, and remove every objection. Practise therefore your child in this armour of God, even as the warrior teaches the youthful soldier to use skilfully the weapon of his warfare.

more unshrinkingly fight the good fight of faith, you will further pray—"*Thy will be done on earth*," by us, "*as it is in heaven*," by thine angels; habitually, reverentially, devotedly. You know well the difficulty of yourself *thus* doing the will of God; and you look with an anxiety, which faith only can calm, to the years when your now smiling infant will be called to do that Will —often in difficulties, sometimes in sorrow and pain, always with fidelity. You strengthen yourself by remembering that He who taught us to offer the petition, himself first fulfilled the duty it involves—fulfilled it to the uttermost. Witness his memorable words, in the moment of surpassing agony—"O my Father! if it be possible, let this cup—this afflictive trial—pass from me; *nevertheless*, *not* as *I* will, *but* as *thou* wilt[1]." Now, remember that this Being had been baptized of water and of the Spirit; that He had deigned, for our example, to accept the aid of the Spirit when He went to the trial of his faith in the wilderness; that prayer for the Spirit was the habit of his life, continually. Say, then, can you doubt but that to your child, now baptized of water and the Spirit, according to Christ's holy ordinance, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — can you doubt but to this child also, when his heart shall have learned the duty of prayer, there will be vouchsafed strength in time of need, to do the will of the same heavenly Father—sustained in every season of spiritual trial, and comforted in every season of spiritual sorrow. And surely, if aught of earthly service might harmonize with angel-worship, it might be

[1] Matt. xxvi. 39.

when infant hands are clasped in prayer to the God like of angels and of men: with upraised look, imploring the help of their heavenly Father to make them good, and dutiful, and submissive; trained by youthful piety for an age of honour, and disciplined by a life of obedience on earth for an eternity of happiness in heaven.

So, when you pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread*," you offer the prayer for your child also. Specially do you petition for spiritual food, day by day, to sustain his new and spiritual life: for true it is, that man "liveth not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And has your heavenly Father ever failed to supply "food convenient" for his creatures? support adapted to their exigencies? Witness the manna in the wilderness, angels' food, bread sent from heaven! Witness the spiritual manna, the bread of life eternal, which came down from heaven! You pray therefore hopefully: you are sure that God will never fail that which is expedient for soul or for body; and you trust for daily supply to meet the daily wants of both. Thus your child will be reminded by you, not to suppose that because he has been baptized into the Spirit, therefore his work is done, and he is already perfect in Christ Jesus! God forbid! He must continually seek fresh supplies of grace, to meet his spiritual growth, ere he "come unto a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ[1]." For exactly as bodily life, at the natural

[1] Ephes. iv. 13. See pages 68 and 91. This view of our baptismal privileges and their conditions cannot be too strongly or too frequently impressed upon *the mind of* the young Christian.

birth, though it be the free gift, and of the free will of God, must yet be sustained by "food which is convenient" for it, and which is appointed thereto of the *providence* of God; so spiritual life, at the spiritual birth, through the free gift of God in Christ Jesus, must be nourished and strengthened by the Word and Spirit, appointed thereto by the *grace* of God. As then you repeat the petition, "Give *us*" — how pleasing to think that your child will one day share your supplications, as now he is privileged to share your hopes.

In offering the next supplication for forgiveness of your own offences before God, the hope of gaining the blessing you ask is grounded upon the fulfilment of the correspondent and appropriate duty of conceding forgiveness to those who have offended you. And even here, as you pray, God "forgive *us*," and include your child in the petition, you must remember, that though he can have at present little to forgive or be forgiven, yet as years creep on, and with growing age circumstances present opportunity, he must both look to God to forgive him his sins, and be ready to forgive others their faults. You will train him to pass over little injuries which may arise with his young companions; teach him not quickly to take offence, but rather smother the first sparks of anger, and check the first outbreaks of a hasty temper; and if good opportunity present itself, begin by extending your forgiveness to his faults, in proportion as he is ready to forgive what he may fancy unjust or unkind towards himself from others. You will thus induce a habit of self-control, for which he will bless your *memory* with his latest breath. This is the more

important, as there is no occasion on which the pride of man more naturally rises against the will of God, than when injury stirs us up to resentment, and would fain blind us to the noble Christian duty of forgiveness—leaving vengeance to the God who claims it as his own[1]. Thus, in most gracious condescension to our infirmity, we are supplied with the strongest possible motive to forgive others, seeing we make forgiveness, on our own part, the condition on which we hopefully ask to be ourselves forgiven.

Under the same feelings you proceed to offer the remaining petition, which indeed is twofold. Here also, when the word "*us*" passes your lips, on *whom* chiefly rest your anxious thoughts?—True, whilst you hang over the smiling features of your unconscious infant, there seems no room for temptation to enter there[2]. Yet, as time progresses, the passions

[1] Rom. xii. 19. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Hence the Christian, whilst he trusts that crime will be punished by human laws, where their power can avail, leaves to the just vengeance of God the punishment of those offences which the laws of man cannot reach: and many are those offences. How often do the malicious and the envious, the backbiter and the slanderer wound the heart of the peaceful and the good, yet escape all just recompense in this world; save the wretched upbraidings of their own conscience, and the dreadful anticipation of that Divine anger, which, however delayed, is not less sure. Thus the faithful servant of Christ escapes the charge, either of enmity towards his enemy, on the one hand, or of indifference to sin on the other. He commits his cause unto the Lord, who judgeth right; and who, making the cause of the righteous his own, will repay the wicked to his face; but keep covenant and mercy with them that love Him.—Deut. vii. 9, 10.

[2] When the mother's watchful eye, quickened by affection, catches the sleeping infant's smile, she thinks how strange is the infant's world of joy; and haply cherishes an anxious wish that no sorrow

will awake; the world must be entered upon; the spiritual enemy will not rest; and this very Being, now so calm and unruffled by active evil, must stand forth, and endure, as a soldier of the cross, such trials as it may please his great Captain to call him to. He must be *proved*, whether he be faithful or no; whether he will welcome sinful thoughts or reject them; whether he will resist the Devil, or yield. And, as with all a mother's quick fear for the future, you bear your thoughts onward, and array before you the varied temptations to which your child may in after-life be exposed in his probation, it is with no lack of earnestness you implore your heavenly Father, that for you *both*, there may be deliverance — that whether your child be tried by the sorrows of the world or its allurements; tempted to unholy murmuring in the one case, to forgetfulness of God in the other; however tempted he be; your prayer is firmly offered up to his heavenly Father, that *He* would "deliver him from evil." And thus methinks you pour forth your supplication — "O heavenly Father, not for myself only, but for this loved one, I pray! O spare him, if so it please Thee; spare him severity of trial. I know, by my own heart, how weak our nature is. I know that help cometh alone of Thee. Be Thou at his right hand, as he passeth through his trials! Be Thou a very pre-

darken a joy so bright. She knows indeed the wish to be vain as it is anxious; a mere fond expectation. Yet who can wonder, that since the first act of the mind is to express love to a mother, a mother's love should stand pre-eminent! The Christian mother, therefore, since neither her affection can prevent sorrow, nor her care subdue it, does what in her lies to smooth the pathway of her child. She commits him to the care of Omniscience — of One, who can turn sorrow into joy, mourning into peace.

nt help in the needful time of trouble! Be Thou also is guide, and lead him in the path of safety. This I ray, by that holy Name, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in which he is now baptized, and by which he hares with your suppliant the covenanted mercy. O Father, save us for the glory of that Name: and nce, through that Name, we are thine, and not our n, O "*deliver us from evil*," for thine own sake! So ay mother and child, prepared here by thy grace, hare together thy glory hereafter; for thine *is* the ngdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and er. Amen!"

PRAYER,

"We yield thee . . . . . through Christ our Lord."

HERE, as in the exhortation to praise, which followed mmediately upon the infant's baptism, the Church inces her characteristic wisdom in a union of the rnest faith with the most unfailing humility. Not aring to suppose that Jesus, the righteous, the holy, d the good, having appointed the ordinance, would thhold its appropriate blessing from those who hould receive the same meekly and reverently, she roceeds upon the conviction, that God *has* regene-ated this infant with his holy Spirit, *has* received him s his own child by adoption; and *has* incorporated him to his holy family, the Church. Not only does your n faith thus derive fresh strength, but your soul our forth its thanksgivings with deeper humility, from e fresh feeling thus excited of your own unworthi-ess and spiritual destitution, when compared with e riches of God's grace, and the abundance of his

mercy vouchsafed to you. Well may we all declare the goodness of the Lord, and praise him for his lovingkindness! Nor does the Church confine herself, on this occasion, to the mere expression of thanks for mercies received. She earnestly implores a continuance of grace to sustain the new life upon which the spiritually new-born infant opens: and she thus conveys most powerful and salutary instruction. Since regeneration is the being "dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness," and being spiritually "buried with Christ in his death," to God you look for grace to continue in this state. It is *He*, who alone can enable even the regenerate to crucify the old man; that is, destroy all unrighteousness, all unholiness[1]; till none be left in the heart, and the whole body of sin, which by nature would live there, be by grace slain, or abolished[2]. It is He, by whose continual aid you trust, that thus figuratively partaking of the death of Christ, the baptized infant may, figuratively, be partaker of his resurrection—raised from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. So do you unreservedly confess that baptism, whilst it is the appointed door of entrance into life, is no security against falling; for though new-born in baptism, man may become degenerate, unless the life correspond with the birth, and the child of God go on to do his Father's will. Your prayer, thus offered, is offered

[1] If it be true, as St. Paul tells us, Ephes. iv. 24, that "The new man is created in righteousness and true holiness," the converse must hold good, that "The old man continues unrighteous and unholy."

[2] So St. Paul expresses the utter overthrow of sin by the power of the cross, Ephes. ii. 16, declaring of Christ Jesus, who is our *reconciliation* with God, that He hath "slain the enmity thereby"

hopefully; that your child may go on from strength to strength, till from spiritual life here, it pass to eternal life hereafter, and, for the sole merits of the gracious Redeemer, share his kingdom and his glory.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EXHORTATION.

"Forasmuch as this child . . . . godliness of living."

AT the close of this service, we find the Church acting with her wonted care to establish the truth, and guarding against any false impression being left upon the minds of the congregation, as to the nature of baptismal regeneration—the extent of its duties, and the fulness of its privileges. She *repeats* her instruction, and *reminds* us that baptism, whilst it admits the baptized into the family of God, demands a new and holy life correspondent to that state; that whilst it gives us the Communion of the Holy Spirit, it demands holy conduct, in testimony of such companionship; that whilst it seals us with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, heirs with Him of a heavenly inheritance; we continue thus privileged only so long as we are active in well doing; "following his example, and being made like unto Him." There is to be no careless indifference as to our actions, because, being regenerate, we are to live by faith. The conditions of enjoying the blessings of our holy baptism are the fulfilment of its holy duties—we "add to

our faith, virtue." He who has been baptized must no more be moved by the power of sin, than the body, when dead, is sensible to any outward agency. He is spiritually to die unto sin, as Christ died in the body. Again, as Christ rose from the dead, so his followers are to rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; to a new life[1]: power thereto being vouchsafed by the Spirit now given. We are also well reminded that this is a daily and continual work. The regenerated is not to be watchful to-day and careless to-morrow — not abstaining from some sins only, and yielding to others—not fancying that he has attained perfection, and needs no striving—that he has gained assurance, and need fear no falling! He is *continually* to struggle against the evil of his nature, and, by the assistance of God's grace, mortify all such evil and corrupt affections, as in our fallen nature still strive against us. Against these we, like St. Paul, shall have to fight to the last, though grace may give at last the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. And whilst thus the service closes with earnestly insisting upon active holiness—a constant fulfilment of holy duties, commensurate with our holy privileges, and rendered possible by holy aid the means by which, under God's blessing upon them, such a course of life is within reach, are stated with equal plainness and force. The Church, remembering the Divine precept, that we "train up a child in the way that he should go," first expects that he be early instructed in the nature of that holy ordinance into which he was admitted into covenant with God, even though then all uncon-

[1] See page 68, and 2 Cor. iv. 16.

ious of the service in which he was engaged; pecially enjoins that the infant be taught, so soon as e shall be able to learn, the nature and extent of this solemn vow, promise, and profession," as a hristian. A mother, therefore, when she perceives the fant's mind to expand, and its powers of apprehen- on to strengthen, will explain *why* he must curb bad mpers, check anger, and hatred, and envy, and all nkindness. She will tell him that such are the works f the Devil, which he is bound by his solemn vow to nounce. She will then lead him to exercise a gentle d tractable spirit, obedient to his parents, kind wards all; because, as he believes in God, he must ve as always under the eye of a Being, to whom are nown the very secrets of the heart; and who will ward the good, and punish the wicked.[1] She will rther train him to seek the love and favour of his eavenly Father by public and private prayer; to rve Him, not in word only, but in deed; doing ways what may please a good and gracious God. nd she will find various modes of facilitating this struction. If he attend the services of the Church, d be led to give such attention, as his young mind is pable of, to the sermon there heard, she may trust, at gradually much instruction will be gained[1]. True, the sermon, man speaks, yet he speaks as of the acles of God; and in God's service, and to God's

[1] Acting upon the counsel thus given by the Church, it will be your re, not only to take your child with you to the house of God, where may hear sermons, but you will encourage him to give attention re, by enquiries *at home* afterwards, as to what he may remember the sermon yourself recalling to him such parts as may be most within his comprehension.

honour: and however his work be, as the apostle designates it, "the *foolishness* of preaching," it is one of the appointed means of saving souls. But home-instruction must be added. You will teach your child "the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments." In the *Creed*, he will gain a fuller knowledge of the great Creator, as the Christians' God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost[1]. That his first prayer should be "the *Lord's Prayer*," is wisely directed; because if any words might prevail for blessing, surely *they* will not fail, which the Lord himself did frame for us. But faith in God, with prayer, naturally leads to obedience. He will therefore learn, and impress upon his memory, the *Ten Commandments*; which, written by the finger of God, were, and are, and ever must be obligatory upon every man[2]. In carrying out these great first principles of faith and practice, you will avail yourself of every opportunity of inculcating the performance of such other relative and social duties as may spring from them; and teach, to the best of your power, whatever else may advance your child in the attainment of that wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation; reminding him never to rest satisfied with his advance in Christian graces, but, like St. Paul and others, the holy men of old[3], "still *go on* unto perfection"—still look

[1] See observations, in a subsequent page, upon the Creed, in the Catechism.

[2] This law—the *moral* law—our Saviour came, *not* to destroy, but to *fulfil*. The law, which He *annulled*, and the worthlessness of which the apostle speaks of, is the *ceremonial* law, or law of works, as a *ground of justification*.

[3] It thus appears that according to the truly evangelical view of baptismal regeneration, taken by the Church, one who is regenerated,

forward to his home in heaven. Thus wisely does the Church, at the conclusion of this service, *again* declare the nature of baptismal regeneration—divesting the doctrine of the new birth of all unconditional benefits; allowing no saving faith therein irrespectively of active holiness; insisting upon a stringent responsibility in the baptized, that being children of God by grace,

born anew of water and the Holy Ghost, and admitted into the family of God in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, according to the express words, and in the express manner laid down by Jesus Christ himself—is not so placed that he cannot fall; but is so placed by this, his new relation to God, that he walks in the Spirit—he is encouraged to ask for the Spirit—he is certified of the assistance of the Spirit—he follows the motions of the Spirit, either to save him from falling or to raise him up The Spirit is continually his counsellor and comforter; enabling him to eschew the evils which he solemnly vowed to renounce; to believe the truth, to which he has pledged his faith; to do the work of righteousness, to which he has solemnly bound himself. And this view of man's regenerate state is that which the most eminent servants of Christ have themselves, in all ages, ever held. Among other instances occurs one, in which testimony to the fact is given indirectly, therefore the more strikingly. I allude to "the venerable and truly apostolic Swartz," as his biographer styles him * How humbly did he adopt the watchful spirit urged upon God's children by the warning voice of St. Paul! "Thinking to stand fast," what heed did he take "not to fall!" If any servant of Christ might have relaxed a watchful care over his own heart; if any might have safely pursued his own way; any have stood in their security; it had been he. Yet mark his confession, that regenerate though he were, "daily did he require to be *renewed* by that Spirit of grace into which he had been baptized—daily was the Spirit his guide and comfort. God "has supported me, *day by day*, in the most gracious manner: He has instructed and *reproved* me by his Spirit: He has never left me without consolation."

* See Dean Pearson's interesting and instructive Life of Swartz, vol. i. p. 129, 3rd ed.

they "purify themselves even as he is pure[1];" and whilst they gratefully cherish in their hearts the love of God their heavenly Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ their blessed Redeemer, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost their promised Comforter, take heed that their faith, as regenerate, be a living principle, fruitful in good fruits; and themselves bound, undeterred by danger, unsubdued by toil, "*daily* to proceed in all virtue and godliness of living."

Thus the Church, with a maternal anxious care like your own, and aware how important to the soul's welfare it is that the noblest and highest springs of human thought and action should be of a purity and fulness, which no turbid streams of earth shall alloy or diminish, inculcates the union of a rational faith and an active piety; free alike from the daring of a bold and irrespective assurance on the one hand, and a reckless indifference, as to grace, on the other.

Hence it is, that you derive strength and encouragement for your work. Methinks, as you hang over your infant, when first after his baptism you watch his sleeping hours, new and happier thoughts crowd into your heart respecting him. Not only have you solemnly dedicated him to the service of Almighty God, now *his* heavenly Father, but you feel that he is, soul and body, under the special care of the same powerful and gracious Being, who, as you humbly trust, will for his own great Name and honour's sake save and defend *him*; as you gratefully remember that he has hitherto preserved you. And what, though the infant be unconscious of this new, spiritual birth, let me

[1] 1 John iii. 3.

again remind you, that neither was he conscious of his natural birth [1]. Indeed our blessed Lord, by this comparison, has given an illustration so apt, that your faith strengthens, and your hope brightens, and you go on your way rejoicing. You resolve, by God's grace assisting you, not to be wanting on your part. You give all diligence to provide due nourishment for his spiritual life, even as you think no labour wearisome, no self-denial hard, no pains lost, which may enable you to provide things needful for his bodily life. Nor will you for a moment be discouraged, because the infant may not yet value or comprehend this your maternal care. You persevere. You reflect, that as at the natural birth there is an evil principle born with the infant, of which he is then unconscious, and that time must elapse ere he can be acted upon by it; so at the second, or spiritual birth by grace—the *new* birth—reason itself gratefully accepts the assurance of a holy principle, then engrafted; even though in this case also the infant be unconscious of the powers implanted in him, and as yet incapable of exercising them. But if there be any period in the life of fallen man when it might be permitted us without presumption to hope, that the Holy Spirit of God would vouchsafe to dwell in the heart, and abide there, it would be *then*; in the years of infancy; when no wilful sin can have been added to original sin, and when the soul is yet free from any wilful offence against its God. Nor can you tell the extent of blessing which thus may follow your child during his passage through the troubles and difficulties of a world of trial. How many trace to the

[1] John iii. 7. See the note, page 99.

abiding feeling of religion, impressed upon their minds by a *mother's* wise instruction on these points in *early* life, a principle of rectitude which, in after years, has given a firmness in seasons of temptation, and a comfort in the hour of sorrow, which no severity of trial has had power to weaken, or disturb.

There was one, who wandered far and long; an outcast and a fugitive: friendless and destitute. None knew the bitterness of his cup, though none had drunk deeper of sorrow. None more quick than he to feel injury and injustice; yet revenge he scorned, and indignation he rose above. His fame and honour were assailed and blackened; yet he pursued his course unmoved, in the calm dignity of conscious integrity. He had from his earliest years cherished the blessed truth, that by covenant he was a child of God; consequently under the loving protection of a heavenly Father. His mother's image and his mother's teaching were in his heart! He remembered also the noble bearing of the Christian hero, to whose character she had so often drawn his thoughts; who, "though troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, cast down, was neither despairing nor forsaken[1]." This example of St. Paul, presented to him in the days of childhood, by the care of his mother, and held up for imitation by her animated expression of admiration at such heroic constancy, had been indelibly impressed upon his mind; and the voice which uttered those praises, still seemed, on every occasion of trial, to fall upon his ear in its own sweet accents of piety and love. His musings were of that minute and discri-

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 9.

minating care with which she watched his feelings and regulated them, and which none but a mother can fully feel or duly practise. "Yes, well do I remember," said the grateful son—"for in looking back through a long life I have learned to contemplate myself in early years, almost as another being—well do I remember that she perceived me to be of a temperament quick to feel a kindness or an injury; and far too sensitive for my own happiness in a rough and selfish world. To these sensibilities she strove, by watchfulness and prayer, to give a right direction[1]. She directed them to the cherishing a lively *fear* of God, which might free me from the fear of man; and an ardent *love* of God, which might engage my best feelings, and allow their full exercise to my peace and my joy. She led me to rest assured in that Divine love, that the reed He might bruise, He would never break, nor leave unhealed the spirit He might see fit to wound. She firmly habituated me to the lesser trials of life, incident to my age; training me to bear them in a Christian spirit, and as intended, by their discipline, to form Christian character, and prepare me for bearing bravely the severer trials of a ripened age. These things, how often have they rushed to memory, as a struggler, through no common difficulties, I have borne, and endured, and suffered, and murmured not! Many a time and oft, when patience well nigh drooped, as sorrows multiplied,

[1] Our blessed Lord does not destroy our affections, but duly regulates them. Luke xii. 4, 5. "I say unto you my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him."

faith sustained me: whilst hope whispered, that at last I should rest near my mother's grave; and, in a world where sin and sorrow never enter, tell her how her labour of love was prospered of high heaven, and her memory blessed by her son!"

Say, reader, was not the mother blessed in her work and labour of love? Was not the son blessed in the mother?—Go then, happy mother! go, and do thou likewise.

INJUNCTION.

"Ye are to take care . . . . . for that purpose."

THAT the minds of those interested in the welfare of the baptized infant may be still more deeply impressed with the true nature of the ordinance itself—a beginning of new duties, as well as an entrance upon new privileges,—the sponsors are held bound for the child, that when reason shall have so expanded and strengthened, that he may fairly be supposed old enough to understand the nature of the holy work in which he engaged by others, he shall again be presented unto God, in the face of the Church, in order that by another solemn service he may, *in his own person*, confirm what others have done for him in his baptism—may release them from their responsibility, and take upon himself the covenant and vow made for him by *them* [1]. But to prepare him for doing this in a spirit consistent with his responsibility as a rational creature, and in a manner divested alike of a careless indifference as to the ordinance, and an ignorant re-

[1] At *Confirmation*, he takes upon himself these vows. But he is first to be instructed in the Church Catechism.

liance on the mere outward performance of it, he is first to be taught what is the nature of the Christian covenant; and what the Divine will as to man's duty towards God, his neighbour, and himself and *that*, as the service expresses it, in the *vulgar* tongue. This expression is to be understood in its strict sense, not as low or irreverent, but as the *English* language; because that is the *common*, or vulgar, language of our country. The expression is used to distinguish the present mode of teaching religion from that used *before the Reformation*. Till that blessed event, the people generally were kept in darkness. Religious instruction was conveyed chiefly in the Latin language; and this was of course unintelligible to the common people. Nay, we find, from our homilies, that the spiritual darkness, consequent upon this mode of teaching, was almost universal; many of the teachers themselves not understanding what they pretended to teach to others; whilst "very few, even of the most simple people, were taught the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of the Faith, and the Ten Commandments, *otherwise* than in Latin, which they *understood not*[1]." To this cause we trace the care evinced by our Church, when first this service was framed, that the instruction given should be within the scope of common understandings, and in the *English*, or *vulgar* tongue. A short account of the two Sacraments was afterwards added; and to the *Catechism* thus brought together into a concise "form of sound words," the young Christian is directed, as the voice by which he gives fit expression to his faith and hope —being now one of the children of God.

[1] See the Homily against Rebellion, part 6.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CATECHISM.

As the Church, acting agreeably to the spirit of the Divine will, exhibited in God's command to his people of old—that they should instruct their *children* in those doctrines and precepts, which contained *their own* religious faith [1]—hath enjoined you to take heed to the same duty on your part; she hath provided a beautiful summary of Christian faith, and Christian practice, termed the *Catechism*; and appointed it to be taught to your children. It is concise and clear; and being conducted by way of question and answer, is admirably adapted for familiar instruction. Its conciseness however, admits of explanation, as the mind of the child expands, and opens to enquiry and information. It may therefore aid in the fulfilment of this your parental

[1] Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8, and 9. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."—How clearly are we here encouraged to instil into the mind, *early*, the principles, which our own hearts and consciences know to be the only sure and safe guide to immortal beings on their way through a world of trial, to a world of rest. What, though the doctrines taught be beyond the capacity of the learner. It is so with all acquirement. If nothing be taught till the principles upon which the instruction is grounded be understood by the learner, there must be an end of teaching. Or shall we neglect that care in heavenly things which we so anxiously give to earthly things? Shall we teach all other knowledge, and leave unheeded that which alone maketh *wise unto* salvation?

duty, if we pursue together our reflections upon the Catechism itself.

The first question is put easily and familiarly; and its answer is admirably calculated to make a child understand more clearly the reason of those obligations which rest upon him as a Christian.

What is your Name?

A Christian is no sooner reminded of the name[1] given to him in his baptism, than he is reminded of the new duties which then devolved upon him, as "a *member* of Christ," and of the new privileges to which he is so entitled. The answer is framed with a view to instruct him on both these points. The members of the body act only as the mind, or head directs them; having no will of their own, only a power of obeying the will: so the *members* of the Church, which is the body of Christ, not doing their own will, but having power to do the will of another, follow the will of Christ their *head*. The expression implies so intimate an union, that *his* will is supposed to be the spring of all our actions, and all our motives. By this union He sympathizes with us; even as the head of the body with its members. "In

[1] In former ages, and even to this day among savage tribes, when a captive taken in war has his forfeit life granted to him, and is received as an adopted child into the family of his conqueror, he receives a *new name*. He then solemnly pledges himself to regard the welfare of the family as his own; to respect his adopted parents as his own; to consider himself born anew, with new feelings, views, and affections—all centering in an adaptation of his whole character to the laws and regulations of the family of which he has now become a member. And as he bears this name of his adoption till his death, he bears about him, so long as life shall last, a perpetual memento at once of his new duties and his new privileges.

all our afflictions, He is afflicted[3];" and we partake of his relation to God, by becoming through Him children of God. Now as children inherit their father's possessions, so heaven is the promised inheritance of the children of God; though we remember that the disobedient become disinherited, and lose their privilege. The child easily thus comprehends why he must obey the laws of his Father who is in heaven, if he would gain his promised inheritance there. Every child values his birthright; and this feeling is strong, in proportion as the inheritance is connected with ample domains, high honour, and if so it happen, with a noble name. Once then let the youthful mind be impressed with the nature of that inheritance which is in prospect for the faithful members of Christ, and dutiful children of God—riches which fail not, honour which dimmeth not, glory which fadeth not—and the most ambitious may find ample motive to hold fast without wavering that profession of his faith, as a member of Christ here on earth, which gives him hope of being hereafter an heir together with Him of his kingdom in heaven.

The mention of the name, with the statement that it was given at our baptism, is immediately succeeded by an enumeration of the duties annexed to the name. And these are stated under three heads.

The baptized person was pledged to *renounce* all evil, in thought, word, and deed, to which the human heart is by nature prone, and by which, when unregenerate, it is led captive. He was also bound to *believe* in that dispensation of the gospel, which God has been pleased to reveal to mankind, through Christ

[3] Is. lxiii. 9.

Jesus. He likewise vowed to *obey*—"keeping God's holy will and commandments;" not merely as an occasional act, but as a habit; "walking in the same *all the days of his life* [1]."

Thus, again, the Church guards us against any misunderstanding as to the nature of baptismal regeneration. It is "a state of salvation;" but it is a state in which we remain, or from which we fall, as we either disregard or avail ourselves of that promised strength, by which alone we are enabled to hold it fast, and without which we must forfeit it. The Christian humbly looks to Heaven for help to fulfil the conditions of his new birth; and he trusts to gain that help because he is permitted by his new privileges freely to ask it of his gracious and loving Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ. How wisely does the Church thus teach her sons to take their stand between a presumptuous assurance on the one hand, and an unqualified self-degradation on the other. What if she encourage them to a holy course, even to the end? she leads them to the saving truth, that their *help* standeth only in the *Lord*, and is the gracious gift of the Father, through their union with Jesus Christ his Son.—"No man cometh to the Father," saith the Lord of Life, "but through me." As then your child is thus united to Christ by baptism, and through Him united to the Father and the Holy Ghost, yours is no visionary hope that he "may *continue* in the same *unto his life's end* [2]."

[1] Refer to pages 68 and 91.

[2] Rom. viii. 32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" And did God's help ever fail you? Was not that help as

O! that *end* of life! How powerfully is your parental care for the spiritual welfare of your child stimulated by the thought—what may the *end* be! Could the future be opened to you, and assurance given that *then* all would be well: could you be certified that there would be peace at *the last*; how would you reconcile yourself to all your own anxious toil, and all of suffering to which even *he* might be called, as his probation! How light would these things be in the scale, weighed against a death of peace!

CHAPTER XX.

THE CREED.

We gather from the writings of the apostles, and especially of St. Paul, that various summaries of

unfailing as your prayers were unceasing? It is impossible for any to retrace their past lives, and not recall the continuance of God's help in carrying them through the difficulties of it. You, yourself—cannot you retrace, in your course, God's constant gracious providence over you and your concerns? Difficulties past, dangers escaped, trials lightened, troubles drawn off—"dispersed," as our Liturgy beautifully expresses it—do not they rise up to memory, and enable you to impress the lessons of piety you are now inculcating upon the mind of your child, by the lessons of experience which you have yourself been taught. Surely you may bid your child not to fear that God's help will be vouchsafed to *him* as it has been to *you*. "For me, my child! God has never forsaken me! He has always heard and answered my prayer, if not by granting success, by granting peace under disappointment, and hope under affliction. His grace has been always vouchsafed to my supplications. So it will be with you. He is the same God to us both. He is the heavenly Father of *you*, as of *me*."

faith were drawn up in the earlier ages of Christianity, and were called, "the form of sound words;" "the words of faith;" "the principles of the doctrine of Christ." The Church continued this wise practice; and that summary of faith, which we now call the *Apostles'* Creed, is one of very ancient use. It is selected for the form of sound words, to be learned by your child; and contains a concise statement of the articles of our Christian faith. You will explain to him the obligation of us all to receive this creed, inasmuch as it is agreeable to Holy Scripture: and further, that it is called the Apostles' Creed, not because the apostles themselves drew it up as it stands, but because it contains the doctrines taught by the apostles, and was in great part used in their days. It is therefore to be used thankfully, as comprising very fully and faithfully all the fundamental doctrines of the religion of Jesus Christ.

This creed opens with declaring a truth, which is the foundation of all true religion, that there is "one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." Faith in this truth, all creation teaches. The glorious luminaries which adorn the heavens, and the meanest herb which the earth brings forth, alike bear testimony to some higher than human power which made and preserves them. The succession of seasons, the alternation of day and night, the constant supply of the fruits of the earth after their kind, with the increase of all living things in a "fearful and wonderful manner [1]," past finding out—*all* do show the power and providence of a supreme Creator: no power less than Omnipotence could have created the world, and

[1] Psalm cxxxix. 14.

no power less than that of its Creator can be equal to the preservation of it. Thus God has never left himself without witness, that He is the Maker of heaven and earth, and that we and all things must trace our original to Him.

We believe then in God "the Father Almighty;" the Maker of the world, for the sustentation of which He continually provides; also the Christian's reconciled and loving Father in Christ Jesus. But God is revealed to the Christian, not only as the almighty Maker of heaven and earth, and the Father of all, but likewise as the Redeemer and the Sanctifier—God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. We believe, therefore, that although man, failing in the obedience which he owed to his Creator, became liable to the punishment of death as a sinner, God the Son, in the person of Jesus Christ, did come down from heaven to earth, and take upon Him the likeness of man, that He might, in human nature, die; by his own death might pay the penalty for sin committed by another, and so restore an offending creation to favour that they might be reconciled children; happy once again in the care and love of their heavenly Father. This He effected by so uniting the divine and human nature, that He was both God and man; one Christ: *Jesus*, the Lord *Christ*. *Jesus*—the Healer; healing, by his own blood, the wound of sin: *Christ*—the anointed King of a spiritual kingdom; at whose "name every knee should bow:" King of kings, and Lord of lords[1]: justly demanding our allegiance in his divine nature, even as we accept his gracious sacrifice of himself in his human nature. To attain his mer-

[1] Phil. ii. 10.

ciful object, and be capable of offering this vicarial sacrifice, He became man. He took upon Him human nature, yet a *sinless* nature! for He was made, "not of the will of man, but of the will of God;" being "conceived of the Holy Ghost." For this miraculous event the mind was prepared by a miraculous announciation or declaration of it[1]. Accordingly, He "was conceived by the Holy Ghost;" and in due time, as with the sons of men, "born of the Virgin Mary," his mother. The event however, being out of the ordinary course of God's providence, was attended by miraculous circumstances, in confirmation of its miraculous character. A star, of splendour above the mid-day sun, pointed the place where the Saviour was born; and angels proclaimed his birth, singing "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." The Christian believes further, that Jesus Christ, having come as a vicarial sacrifice for the sins of a guilty world, did suffer, and crown all his sufferings by death, under Pontius Pilate—that is, at the time when Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea. Thus the page of history is referred to in proof of the facts here recorded to have taken place; and the caviller is challenged to show whether or no the historians of those times deny the facts, or record them. The mode of his suffering is specified—He was "crucified," as He had foretold; and at a time when there could be no reasonable apprehension of his enduring a violent death; and least of all, a death reserved for malefactors of the worst description; men whose crimes were of the darkest stamp—

[1] Luke i. 26.

"sedition and murder." Yet his own prophecy was accomplished. He bore his cross, and was nailed to the cross, and on the cross did die. He "was crucified," and "dead." It is remarkable, that in proof of his having *died*, we have the indirect testimony of his enemies;—the narrative informing us, that when the Roman soldiers—who were proceeding, according to custom, to the dreadful act of breaking the legs of the sufferers, that by increasing their agony they might hasten their dissolution—came to Jesus, they were so convinced that "He was dead already," that "they brake *not his* legs." How mercifully is the record of this fact preserved! for upon the reality of the death of our great Propitiator depends the world's redemption. That after death He should have the rites of burial, was not a matter of course in the case of those who died a malefactor's death. The Romans granted it as a favour, when requested by some person of consideration. Accordingly, the rich Joseph of Arimathea "begged the body of Jesus." Thus was fulfilled one of those remarkable and very striking prophecies respecting Jesus, which, as in themselves they involve a seeming contradiction, but in their fulfilment reconcile such seeming, afford the clearest and most convincing testimony that the whole must have been of God. This Being, who suffered with the wicked by a malefactor's death, made his grave, *not* with the wretched *outcasts* of society, but with the *rich* [1]. Having thus lived and died, in the flesh, evidencing that He had taken upon Him the nature of man; having deigned moreover that his body

[1] Isaiah liii. 9.

should receive the solemn and affecting rites of burial — thereby sanctifying and hallowing our tender services to the unconscious bodies of the loved dead, whom we may ourselves consign to the grave—He passed, a disembodied spirit, as we also shall, to the place of the departed; a place, where the soul, either in peace with Abraham, or in woe with Dives, waits all its appointed time, till the body be raised at the last day, and be then re-united to it for ever. But He saw no corruption. Having conquered death for himself and for his redeemed, "on the third day, He rose again from the dead," according to his own sure word of prophecy[1]. And the good providence of God so ordered the circumstances attending that event, that no historical fact, sacred or profane, has so strong concurrent testimony to its truth, from friends and enemies. The very authorities, who were interested in refuting it, took the exact measures which confirmed it; and of the agents whom they suborned, the falsehoods bore their own refutation. Jesus had prepared the minds of men for his own resurrection, by the miraculous powers He exercised in raising to life the widow's son of Nain, and his friend Lazarus. Each event gave added proof how completely the work He had undertaken was accomplished. Death was conquered, and life and immortality were brought to light. This glorious truth was confirmed, when after remaining forty days, in his risen body, with his disciples, "He ascended into heaven," bearing with Him the very form and substance which had yielded to death upon the cross! His memorable discourse

[1] Mark viii. 31.

with the disciples upon this subject shows how earnest He was that we should bear constantly in mind the startling, but assured and comforting truth, that He did take up into heaven the body, in which He had lived, and died, and rose again. Thus it was evidenced, that there was no delusion—no changing of the body of the crucified Jesus. Here was a proof; open for examination by all, and that for the space of forty days, yet never overthrown, or disallowed; that the same body, in which Jesus had lived, died, and rose again, He did bear with Him into heaven. Hence the angels, after his ascension, held forth to his wondering disciples the glorious hope that "*even so* them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him." Hence too the apostle speaks the words of assured comfort when he reminds us[1], that not only have we an Intercessor in the risen Saviour, but that He will be a *prevailing* Intercessor, seeing that having borne with Him into heaven the form of man, He remembereth whereof we are made; remembereth our infirmities, and hath compassion upon them. To this end He sitteth—placed high in power—at the right hand of his Father. There He is our Intercessor, ever living to plead for us and advocate our cause, till the day of grace shall give place to the day of judgment. Then shall He come forth to be the Judge of all mankind—the quick, and the dead. But He will so appear, still as the Son of *man*—still forgetting not his brethren, in whose likeness, as their incarnate God, He deigned to be touched with all the feeling of their infirmities. Yet shall there be strict and perfect judgment.

[1] Heb. iv. 16.

Impress this truth, *early*; it may, even late, be remembered. Point it to the heart. Show from it the certainty of detection at last, even where cunning may, for a time, have concealed a sin. Dwell upon the awful consideration, that at the judgment-seat of God, not only will our actions be tried, but our words and our very thoughts[1]. Teach your child to feel that even now, in his early years, this same Being, who hereafter will judge him, knows his secret thoughts and wishes; and if he can conceal any thing wrong from *you*, he *cannot*, for a moment, by night or by day, conceal it from a heart-searching *God*. You will explain to him, that God, since *He* "made us, and not we ourselves," *must* know the very inmost recesses of our mind. This is the more important, because a fallen nature, from the hour of Adam's fall to the present, is ever prone, in sinning, to act as if God saw not; or seeing, could be deceived[2]. Nor is there a more powerful consideration to guard against evil than a deep and abiding conviction, that God is always present; always knows both what we *do*, what we *say*, and what we *think*; and will at the last day punish or reward us, as we shall be amongst the righteous or the wicked: and that even in this world, if vice and cunning *seem* to triumph, the righteous shall not go unrecompensed; the wicked shall not go unpunished. Ponder with him the glorious scene, opened to us by our Lord himself in his memorable description of this his great judgment; and since the hearts of the young and ardent are specially moved by

[1] For "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Matt. xii. 36.

[2] Psalm x. 12.

a love of praise from those they love, whilst you warn him by the dreadful misery of the wicked, cast out with the Devil and his angels, fail not to mark the animating language of encouragement to the good—"Well done! good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "Come ye blessed children of my Father! inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

This your parental work and labour of love will be much facilitated, when you have explained to him the next article—faith in God the Holy Ghost. Indeed the extent of your explanation of this or other doctrines of the Gospel will of course be regulated by the advancing age and strengthening reason of your child. Even the youthful Jesus advanced gradually in wisdom—increasing "in wisdom as in stature." And, after all, there is much which you will teach him to receive, implicitly, as founded upon the Word of God, and beyond the power of human reason to explain or comprehend. At the same time show that it is consistent with our reason to believe such mysteries, because it is reasonable for a finite creature to fall short in his knowledge of an infinite Being—who *must be*, essentially, *incomprehensible*. Therefore it is, that our gracious Redeemer has bid us *all* receive the Gospel as little children; content to obey the commands, and do the will of our heavenly Father as implicitly as you expect your children to do your will, and obey you; even when you give no reason for your command, and your motive be either hidden from them, or unintelligible to them. Hence St. Paul, inspired though he was, confessed himself utterly *unable* to comprehend the hidden things of God;

"seeing through a glass, darkly;" patiently waiting to be removed to a higher state of existence, ere he could "see God face to face, and know Him as He is." But what is *above* our reason to *comprehend*, may be *consistent with* our reason to *believe*. Thus by a comparison and illustration, taken from a consideration of the mysteries of nature, how admirably does our Lord himself justify us as reasonable creatures in believing "in the Holy Ghost"—"the Lord and Giver of life"—without whom we die. Does the mind wonder how this can be! Is it slow to believe the actual agency of a power which no eye can discern? Is it backward to follow the motions of a counsellor whose guiding hand we see not, and to rejoice in the consolations of a comforter, whose soothing voice we hear not?—Hearken to the Saviour's striking word of instruction! "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but *canst not tell* whence it cometh, or whither it goeth. *So* is every one which is born of the *Spirit*." When, therefore, the coldhearted and the proud will not, or do not, allow the continual agency of the breath of heavenly life, the Spirit of God, do they not stand condemned alike by the stern upbraidings of the wounded, but unhealed, conscience, and the sure consolation of the penitent and contrite? Whence those upbraidings, but from the secret, though disallowed, workings of the Spirit of God acting upon our spirit? Whence those consolations, but from the hidden, but welcome, agency of the same Spirit, turning our hearts to righteousness and peace? On the one hand are the terrors of conscience, with an angry storm of reproof bending the proud soul to earth, and making it feel how weak it is—how powerless to

stand against its God: on the other hand, are its gentle influences which raise the bruised reed, and its warm and animating breathings which fan into flame the smoking flax: giving strength to the weak, and courage to the faint. These truths alike show that the return of the penitent to holiness and peace, and the patient continuance in well doing of the humble and the good, must depend upon some higher than human agency; and *that* agency, the Word of God teaches us is the continued agency of the Holy Ghost; "the Lord and Giver of" that spiritual "life;" into which we were first admitted at our baptism, when we were baptized into the "name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Faith in the Holy Catholic Church is the next article in this creed. And it well follows that, in which we profess a belief in the Holy Ghost; because if the Church of Christ becomes *catholic*, or *universal*, its power to become so must proceed from the sanctifying influence and protection of the Holy Ghost. For our blessed Saviour, when He established his Church, committing the Gospel to the care of his apostles and their successors, and commanding them to spread its doctrines, catholically—that is, universally "teaching *all* nations," He encouraged them to the work, promising strength for their weakness, and assuring them support for their infirmities, by the constant presence and unceasing protection of the Holy Ghost, which should "*abide* with them *for ever*." This Holy Catholic Church—in which the Christian believes are treasured the saving truths of salvation, as revealed by Jesus Christ, preserved by the Holy Spirit, entrusted to the apostolical ministry through a long

succession of ages, testified to by the saints in their lives, and by the martyrs in their death, offers the shelter of her faith to every individual soul of every nation; and, as you yourself will be ready to bear witness, holds forth peace to every penitent, and hope to every faithful soul; and, whilst arming us with a courage which forbids any wavering in upholding God's honour, fosters a charity towards our fellow-creatures, which neither enmity can destroy, nor the contradiction of sinners weaken. In no spirit of presumption does the Catholic Church claim to be *holy*. It is founded upon the holy Gospel of the Holy Jesus. His holy faith is its profession. It acknowledges none other than his holy name, whereby men can be saved. It observes his holy ordinances. In all its "bounden duty and service," it looks to be sanctified by his Holy Spirit. And as this, the outward visible Catholic Church is holy, so each member of the same is bound to lead a holy and religious life. St. Paul's question most appropriately suggests itself—"What manner of persons ought we to be in all *holy* conversation?" lest otherwise, falling from holiness here, we fall from happiness hereafter. And though corruptions, both in faith and practice, may, in different places and in divers manners, have afflicted the Church; though trials and persecutions may have overtaken its defenders, and may still await them; yet we believe, that as by our Lord's appointment there was founded a Church—a body, of which all men of all nations, without respect of persons, are invited to become members; believing in his name, and professing obedience to his laws—so through his merciful protection shall it continue for ever; not

unassailed indeed by enemies, nor free from error, but not destroyed by either. The gates of hell, though assaulting it, shall never prevail against it. Thus inviting all to enter into the gates of her Zion, through Him, who alone is the way and the truth and the life, she looks that in so doing, they preserve "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" being called by one Name, and in one hope of their calling. Hearkening to this call, and heeding well the spirit of it, you gladly present your child as a believer in Christ's Holy Catholic Church; the family of God upon earth, who share together the bounty of the great spiritual Householder: all united by one common bond of mutual love and good will; but each ministering according as he is called thereto [1].

Thus there springs up between the members of this great family a feeling of common interest and mutual responsibility, which is well calculated to bind together all believers, ministers and people, in that "concord" which their Father "loveth." There springs up a unity of purpose, which is itself strength. They have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and

[1] You will here explain to your child, as his opening intellect may be able to receive the instruction, that by the Church is meant, not only those who minister in holy things, but those who are ministered unto. The ministers of the Word are "*stewards* of the household of faith;" dispensing God's holy Word. But they are still fellow-servants with those to whom they minister. Therefore each party is equally responsible to God, in their several stations, to uphold the Church which constitutes his family on earth. Nor can any injure the minister in his office, or slight and set at naught his delegated authority, without derogating from the honour of the Lord of the household, who entrusts it to him; and weakening to the members of the Church, the comfort of that ministration which is appointed for their benefit.

Father of all." Hence we believe in "*the communion of saints.*" This is one of the numerous and more striking instances in which we specially feel the value of that Liturgy, by the aid of whose noble services the apostolical branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, established in this land, is enabled to spread its shelter from East to West, from North to South, through the length and breadth of every region, which the name of Christ hath reached. The faithful are enabled "to speak the same thing;" to heed the same truths; to cherish the same feelings; and offer, so to speak, accumulated service to the honour of Him, by whose name they are called. Indeed, since thus we not only are individual worshippers, but are identified with the great assemblies of all our fellow-Christians, what a beautiful and animating thought it is, that in the holy hour of worship, with our own individual prayers, and with the united prayers of the congregation of which we form a part, rise also the according voices of our whole Church with one consent before the mercy-seat [1]. Surely we may, without

[1] Let your child read St. Paul's memorable and clear directions to Timothy upon the subject of such a service, as all the congregation might join in; and point out to him the several divisions of it. We are directed to pray, first, for the whole race of mankind; then, for those especially on whose conduct, as placed by God's providence in posts of rule and high honour, the welfare of their fellow-creatures depend; and so, throughout, with a due regard to order and edification. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." And in this orderly and edifying service you yourself well know how powerfully we are all aided in our own admirable liturgy; by which we are enabled, not only to cherish the same feelings of devotion, the same

presumption, trust that where with one accord common supplication is thus made, some there be in the city of our God, the Zion which He loveth, who, through faith in Christ Jesus our righteousness, will be heard and accepted as righteous; and that "for their sakes" He will save the city. Society itself owes much to this "communion of saints." It fosters love of the brethren, by which many an evil of life, if not removed, is alleviated. A feeling of sympathy is excited, supplying often the only sweet drop poured by human kindness into that varied cup of bitterness which sorrow brings: and this feeling arises naturally from being engaged in the same service. For instance, when all raise the supplication to be "forgiven their trespasses," and themselves add the condition on which alone they look to have it answered, even *as* they forgive others, who trespass against them—is it possible for the heart of these suppliants to retain anger? Enmity cannot for a moment remain there. Every unkindly feeling must instantly be extinguished. The Christian, unselfish ever, in his joy forgets not another's woe; and in his own hour of sadness can still rejoice in another's joy[2]. This view of

resolved faith, the same bright and glorious hopes, the same love to that blessed Redeemer on whom that faith rests, and from whom that hope springs—the same holy reliance on the Spirit of grace to "put into our minds good desires, and to bring the same to good effect"—not only are we enabled thus to *feel* together, we do more. Together, with one consent we give utterance to them; rejoicing thus to fulfil the apostle's solemn injunction delivered in the holy name of the Redeemer, to let our lips declare, with one accord, our common supplication—"I beseech you, brethren, *by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that ye all *speak* the same thing." 1 Cor. i. 10.

[2] Here it is, as regards social life, the Christian has a manifest

the subject may aid you in instilling a livelier sense of devotion into the minds of your children, and induce a greater fixedness of attention in them, when as they kneel with you in the house of God, and join the congregational services with their own sweet, youthful voices, you teach them to feel that they are themselves part of that communion of saints, whose united offering of prayer, and penitence, and praise is rising up acceptably, as you humbly trust, through Christ —to the throne of Him who ruleth over all. The feeling may serve as an added motive for greater sincerity, for a more ardent devotion, and a warmer piety. You may remind them that even the beloved apostle's ardour glowed with a brighter flame as he felt himself one of the assembly of the saints; one of "the Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven." The bonds of such brotherhood what enemy shall weaken? Nay, we share the communion of saints in a still higher sense. St. Paul bids us rejoice, not only that we are, in Christ Jesus, "fellow-citizens with the saints, and

advantage over men of a more worldly mind. He is not so unreasonable as to suppose it possible to pass through life without meeting with occasional injustice and unkindness from his fellow-creatures. He will understand St. Paul's practical counsel "*As much as lieth in you*, live peaceably with all men." He therefore takes heed, that he will do nothing wilfully to break the peace. If others will have enmity, if they will, either from envy, hatred, and malice, quarrel with him; he first forgives them in his heart, and then, remembering his heavenly Master's advice in such painful cases, "goes to his adversary," and proffers forgiveness and peace. If, after all, malice will not forego its miserable enmity, then he prays for his enemy, and begs of God grace for himself to forgive as he would be forgiven. He looks to what will bring him *peace* at the *last*.

What a blessing to society is a principle like this! what a peaceful world should we have, were the principle carried out!

of the household of God[1];" members of his Church and family on earth; but that we "are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of our God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of *angels*[2]:" animating us with the hope of a communion also with the spirits of the just made perfect, and with the angel-company of heaven. Hence, when we bless God's holy name "for all his servants departed this life," we add our earnest and heartfelt supplication for "grace, so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of his heavenly kingdom[3];" so holding communion with them in a spirit of holiness, and so heeding the brightness of their examples, that though dead, they yet speak instruction and consolation to us. Nor is it only in the ardour of his heavenly aspirations that the apostle raises our view to a communion with angels! He does but follow as the Lord of angels leads. Our blessed Saviour assures us, that "there is joy in the presence of God, over one sinner that repenteth!" And does not his gracious assurance leave us the sure and unavoidable inference, blessed as it is sure, that the good and holy have communion with angels?—Else why and where this sympathy?

But what would profit us our faith in these truths, unless we had a well-grounded belief in "*the forgiveness of sins?*" We might believe in the Holy Catholic Church and the communion of saints; but unforgiven, what comfort could we find from the one? what share could we have in the other? Indeed, that your child

[1] Ephes. ii. 19. [2] Heb. xii. 23.

[3] See the prayer for the Church Militant; in the Communion Service.

may the better understand and feel the value of that faith, "*according* to which [1]," the sins of the truly penitent are forgiven, show him what would be man's state, without "forgiveness of sins." Being, all of us, born in sin, we are by nature children of *wrath!* and who can stand before God when He is angry? There is one only alternative—pardon or punishment. A child knoweth his own wretchedness when he has offended his parents! He, perhaps, strives to forget the estrangement, but it is an unsuccessful effort. In his hours of amusement or business it is still uppermost; a painful, miserable feeling, which allows no rest. During the hours of stillness he thinks again and again of past scenes of peace. He ponders the contrast; painfully but beneficially: for at length he casts away the pride of self, confesseth his fault, is accepted again into favour, and bounds again with a joy and gladness at reconciliation, which itself full well proves the wretchedness of the previous enmity. Thus, only in a higher degree, the soul has no peace with itself until it is at peace with its God. Till we can feel forgiven of God, through Christ, wealth gives no enjoyment, power holds forth no charm, learning no interest; but when the word is passed—"Thy sins be forgiven thee"—then the heart bounds forth exultingly; and, like the lame man healed, we "leap for joy." Living in this faith, we never despair. Does conscience reproach us ever? does the Spirit of God upbraid us with any wrong committed? any duty neglected? We flee for pardon as penitents;

[1] Matt. ix. 29. "Then touched he their eyes, saying, *According* to your faith be it unto you."

and we so flee to the throne of grace, hopefully; because, though "we have sinned, Christ hath died, and become the Propitiation for our sins;" and "*his* blood cleanseth from *all* sin."

Moreover, He who, by the power of his grace, raises the soul from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, and by forgiving our sins, sets us free for the duties and the joys of spiritual life here on earth, hath power, by his will, to raise our bodies from the grave, and form them anew; fitted for their glorious duties and blissful enjoyments hereafter in heaven. We believe therefore "in *the resurrection* of the *body*." This is a truth which touches forcibly upon the heart and tenderest affections of the young. How hardly do they reconcile themselves to part with the dear departed, when father, mother, sister, brother have been subdued by death! How have their young, gentle hearts, in the first sorrow perhaps, with difficulty divested themselves of pain, even in the thought of the very body of the loved one being deposited in the cold damp earth—the winds of heaven driving over the grave—the snow its mantle, or the night dews chilling it. We know indeed, that when the spirit is separated, that the body feels no more—dust to dust returns. Still the impression of painful association is interwoven in the hearts of the very young too closely, for aught but maturer years and added reflection to remove. How eagerly therefore they catch at the glorious truth, that this very body shall be raised again! How well they understand its blessedness! If once it be fixed firmly in the hearts of the young mourners, hope, calm and bright, succeeds to their dark and *wildering* sorrow. Almost sinking in despair, when

this, their first heavy grief, fell on them, they gradually raise their drooping spirits. They learn that their separation is but for a time. Faith lends her ready aid; assuring them, on the promise of Him, who is Truth, that, not only are the *spirits* of the righteous at rest and in peace when they leave this mortal state, but that of a surety their *bodies* shall be raised again; and be seen, as now, knowing and known. Then also shall the feelings of affection which bound them together on earth, a family of love, be renewed with a vividness which our minds cannot now picture to ourselves, and be expanded far above our imagination to conceive. They shall meet, and know again no parting; for they shall be ever with the Lord!—What a motive does this thought supply to the young for habitual love and reverence in this life towards parents, whom they thus hope to meet and know again in the world beyond the grave.

This thought gathers strength, both as a source of consolation to those who mourn the dead, and as a motive for increase of mutual love and good-will amongst survivors. True! it is an awful consideration that an existence awaits us which will know no end for ever; that though ages and ages may pass, the end will never be—the state of the wicked, an eternity of woe; that of the righteous, an eternity of bliss. The prospect of eternity therefore may well appal the wicked, and overwhelm the impenitent with dismay. Yet is the object of the Almighty, in opening to us this prospect, merciful. He would fain withdraw us all from evil by the *strongest* motives. And who would dwell with *everlasting* burnings? Therefore does our compassionate Saviour warn us, that for the impeni-

tent are prepared punishments, which are as a worm which never dieth, and a fire which never shall be quenched. Whilst, for the good, there shall be for ever, light, and joy, and glory. Our faith then being firm, that when again we meet those whom here we mourn in their death, we may, through Jesus Christ, so meet, that we part no more, but dwell with them in "life everlasting," it is impossible but that our present grief will be lightened, its bitterness removed. The separation is only for a season; the re-union for ever. What an additional motive is thus supplied for "living together in unity;" as David beautifully expresses that harmony of feeling and participation of affection which should ever characterize our families. Indeed, suppose variances sometimes to occur, let but the thought of that "life everlasting" spring up, in which we hope to live together, and how instantly do we feel, that all this world can give or take away is dearly purchased by a risk of that love towards others, in which we would fain die. The *occasion* which tries our patience *passeth away;* the *spirit*, with which it has been met, *passeth not away:* and how much happier to think, that when we all meet together in another world, we shall meet, not as those who have injured, or maligned, or despised others, but as those among whom there was, on earth, one unvarying feeling of kindness and of love. Does your enquiring child wonder how these things shall be—amazed that among the myriads which shall be gathered at the judgment-day, individuals will be distinguished from each other, and known as they are known now?—you will explain to him, that our increased knowledge and expanded power of apprehension then, will be as far beyond our

present powers; nay, infinitely farther beyond them; than those of the most learned and skilful in science or in art now excel him; whilst so clear will *then* be our conception of God's ways, so enlarged our view of his dispensations, that we shall know even *Him*, as He is known; and, if admitted into his glorious kingdom, shall serve and praise Him unceasingly; for then, Time itself shall be no longer. We shall dwell together "in life *everlasting*."

"*What dost thou chiefly learn . . . . thy belief.*"

The Church adds a concise and specific statement of what is *chiefly* "learned in these articles of our Christian belief." This is done wisely. Your child has thus a standard of Christian principles, on which to fall back, as it were, when questioned as to his faith. He is enabled "always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him[1]:" and you yourself well know how important it is to have a clear and distinct view on whatever subject you happen to be engaged, because the mind naturally rests more or less firmly upon principles, as they are vaguely or distinctly exhibited.

He "*believes in God the Father.*" How can he do otherwise when he looks to the natural world around him? The creation and preservation of the universe, in its marvellous and uniform course, argue incontestably the existence and superintendence of an all-present eternal Being, far beyond our finite powers to comprehend. That Being can be none other than God.

He "*believes in God the Son.*" Here the whole his-

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 15.

tory of our Saviour, doing such works as none but God could do, and suffering so deeply, that no "sorrow was ever like to his sorrow," is in distinct proof as to the union of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ. Dying for our sins, He rose again for our justification; and in these two events severally proved himself to be perfect man and perfect God.

He "*believes in God the Holy Ghost.*" The personality, the office, the godhead of the Holy Ghost are proved by those Scriptures wherein the Almighty reveals his will to man. It is He who sanctifieth the elect people of God, and supplieth grace, that they may make their calling and election sure.

Fixed in this faith, and looking forward to the great end of all things, the soul is trained to bear every disappointment meekly; to let no earthly cloud dim its bright hope of heaven; no lower aim to interpose between itself and its God. Be it your care that your child learns to add to this faith, virtue; and, because he loves the Saviour in whom he believes, be prompt to obey the commandments of the Master whom he loves.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

"FAITH without works," saith the apostle, "is dead." His monitory precept is grounded upon the declaration of our Lord himself, that obedience is the proper test of sincerity.—"*If* ye love me, keep my *command-*

ments." Hence all our profession of piety and holiness—our adopted sonship with God, and our hope of inheriting his kingdom—are as nothing, unless we live up to that profession, and walk worthy of that high calling. To this end we seek the aid of the Holy Spirit, continually to "sanctify us and all the elect people of God." The very term—"*elect* people"—instructs us to remember God's ancient people, who, even whilst they were the elect, the chosen, and by circumcision in covenant with Him, yet fell from their high hopes when they fell from stedfastness; neither saved by their faith, nor excused for their profession. So *we*, though now God's chosen and *elect*, having been admitted into his holy family by baptism, *stand* only by a *lively faith*—a faith which shall prove itself alive unto God by a holy *obedience:* prompt to *do* the *will* of Him whom we call Lord [1]. Therefore the young Christian, after a declaration of his faith, is taught to enumerate the *Ten Commandments:* a code of divine laws, which he is bound, by his Christian covenant, to "observe and do:" since faith, though alone it saveth fallen man through Jesus Christ, saveth not the ungodly, the worldly, the impenitent—it saveth only the contrite and the good.

"*Which be they?*"

In briefly reverting to the *history* of the giving of these commandments, the Church plainly signifies that they are binding upon us now, as they were of old upon Israel; because we now boast ourselves to be the people of God; his chosen people in Christ

[1] See page 88.

Jesus, as they of old were, under Moses. And it is of this moral law, which is of universal extent, affecting every age and every condition, that our Lord speaks, when in contrasting it with the ceremonial law which was to be done away with by his incarnation and sacrifice, He declares of *this*—"One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." These tables [1], indeed, did but concentrate those laws, which were of earliest application, and enjoined the fulfilment of religious and social duties; though being scattered, they were perhaps little heeded till this code was framed. Upon Christians their enactments are more strictly binding than the mere letter of them would indicate. In the various discourses of our Lord particularly in his beautiful sermon upon the mount, He is not contented with enforcing these commandments literally; He carries them out to the extent of the principle they severally involve; and so proves the truth of his own declaration—"I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil." And if it were binding on God's ancient people to heed the statutes and ordinances delivered by Moses, how much stronger obligation lies upon us, his people, now, to observe the laws delivered by a greater than Moses, and recorded in the Gospel of peace. Was gratitude for deliverance from Egyptian bondage motive for their willing obedience; what strength does that motive gather with respect to ourselves? We rejoice in our greater deliverance from the bondage of sin. By dwelling upon this thought, and conveying the instruction it supplies in such manner as the age of your child may, from time to

[1] The *first* four commandments constituted the *first* table of the *law; the* remaining *six*, the *second* table.

time, afford you opportunity, much will be done towards rendering his obedience to God's laws, not only a reverential, but a willing service. "We love *him* because He first loved *us*." By such obedience, founded as it is upon faith in the all-atoning merits of the blessed Jesus, and sustained by the continual aid of the Holy Spirit, we humbly trust to "make our calling and election sure."

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

THIS first commandment naturally claims its priority. Not only is the great truth it conveys—there is *one only God*—the foundation of all true religion, but the situation of the Jews, at the time of its being delivered, was such as to render the declaration of it peculiarly called for. They had just entered upon their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness; and though, since they were to be supported there miraculously, as to food and clothing, they would need little intercourse with surrounding nations, yet there would of necessity be *some* intercourse between them. Those nations however were idolaters; worshipping stocks and stones, the work of men's hands. Hence arose a danger of great magnitude. Evil example might withdraw Israel from the true worship. Every care was necessary to prevent the chosen becoming idolaters like unto the heathen. Therefore the first commandment was express; and was directed to *each individual* of the sons of Israel. —"*Thou* shalt have none other gods but *Me*."—Whatever other gods the nations around them might worship, *they* were, in private as in public, to worship

that Being only, who "having brought them out of Egypt through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm[1];" exercising his omnipotence to save and defend them; justly claimed to be, in a more especial manner, *their* God. Moreover, knowing the infirmities of his creatures, and having compassion upon them; and judging that from the very pride which ignorance of spiritual things generates, they would hesitate to believe what they could not comprehend, He was pleased to accompany the declaration of this truth with such manifestations of his awful power and supreme majesty, as the God of nature, that doubt itself should yield; confessing Him to be *the* God, the *only* God—and to this glorious evidence of his omnipotence *all* Israel did bear testimony[2]!

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

This one "God is a Spirit." They therefore "who worship Him, must worship Him, in Spirit[3];" and *not* as the *Gentiles*. Hence the Second Commandment proceeds to specify the modes in which this God is *not* to be worshipped. He is not to be worshipped under any similitude; under any form or resemblance of outward things. *That* were to degrade the majesty of the Eternal, who is equally present at all times and in all places, filling all space; confined to no region, acknowledging no limits. To us in these days of evangelical light and truth—the Gospel ray pouring its flood of brightness far and wide, throughout the

[1] Deut. v. 15. [2] Exodus xx. 18, 19. [3] John iv. 24.

breadth and length of this Christian land—to us it appears scarcely credible, that rational beings could for a moment suppose it acceptable service to Deity, when they bowed before the idol which their own hand had made, or offered prayers to the similitude of ought created. Yet such was the case with the idolatrous nations, by whom the Israelites were surrounded. Even the sun, moon, and stars, though evidently created things and doing service to man, became in their turn, objects of man's worship, till at last so utterly debased was the human mind, that some, as the Prophet with just and scornful reproof expresses the folly of their sin [2], "did take of the trees of the forest, burn part thereof in the fire, and of the residue make a God, even their graven image: they did fall down unto it, and worship it, and pray unto it, and say—Deliver us, for *Thou* art our God." Well might he add the bitter taunt, "They feed of ashes." Nay, not angels themselves, though the highest order of created beings, and "things of heaven," are fit objects for man's worship. To kneel to them, to pray to them, is sin. They are but ministers of God's will. Nor let any urge, that because our best, our highest, our most spiritual worship cannot be really worthy in God's sight, therefore it be indifferent *how* we worship. There is a very intelligible distinction between the worth of a duty performed, and its necessity. So our prayers in themselves, cannot of course be of worth before God; and He could give the blessing we ask, or remove the evil we deprecate, without our supplications; yet, as if for ever to set this question at rest,

[2] Is. xliv. 16—20.

show the fallacy of the caviller, and establish the distinction now drawn; after promise of blessing to Israel, large and free — prosperity for desolation; security for ruin; purity for uncleanness—thus saith the Lord God; "I will yet for this be *enquired of* by the house of Israel, to do it for them [1]." So here also, however the careless may think it of trifling moment how they worship, God adds an assurance, that He is jealous of his honour; jealous of the heart, which ought all to be his own. He will not be content that half be his, and half the world's. He cannot away with any indifference in his spouse the Church. He bears no rival. He claims her whole affection. We cannot serve God and Mammon—cannot serve religion and the world together. And if we love the world, where and when we ought to love God, He is jealous of our misplaced affections. Teach your child to apply the instruction this subject conveys, by pointing out that whatever we fear or love, more than we fear or love God, becomes to us an idol. Our attachment to it will be considered by God, as the sin of idolatry. Wealth, honour, pleasure, learning, influence—whatever interest divides our heart with God is idolatry, and idolatry is sin [2]. Nor could any threat show more awfully the danger of thus withdrawing our reverence from the Lord our God, or dividing our love for Him with any other object, than the punishment denounced against the offenders among his people in old times—a punishment, whose peculiar character would seem to bring the stoutest heart to a sense of sin and its consequences. The punishment reacheth not the offender

[1] Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

[2] Col. iii. 5.

only, but extends to those who are dearer to him than himself. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the Fathers upon the *children*, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Suppose for a moment any individual to be so insensible to *his own* welfare as to despise the threatenings of God, and persevere in a course of sin, and in awful obstinacy await its punishment—is there one, who would willingly bring down divine punishment upon his *children?* Let *their* life be periled, and lo! the parent stands the hazard, and meets the peril, and risks *his* life for theirs. Nay, you, a Mother—is there ought of toil, of danger, which you would not undergo to ease your child! Abstain then from wilful sin! Make not an idol of the world, for it is at enmity with God: bow not down to the will of your own heart, lest you not only dishonour God, and ruin your own soul, but at least risk the misery of entailing upon those you love better than yourself, even upon your children and your children's children, the anger of the Lord *for your sake!* "O!" methinks your harrowed heart bursts forth in the language of indignation—"O! that be far from me!" It is well—God grant it be far from thee; and from every parent! But the warning is salutary[1]; and will

[1] It must be borne in mind that these peculiar enactments and conditions were provided for a peculiar state of things; and the promises and threats accompanying them applicable to a temporal state: for God never will punish, spiritually or eternally, one man for the sins of another. "The soul that *sinneth*, it shall *die*."

Still, if parents lead a sinful life, the consequences to their children are often misery and ruin. Indeed, that is but the common course of cause and effect. And as to the baneful influence of evil example upon young minds, it were needless to argue. Experience shows it

never lose its power, so long as fallen creatures have to struggle in this fight of faith; this casting down the idols of their own untoward wills. But not only are we warned from evil by the dread of bringing punishment upon our children, by the sins of their parents; we are encouraged and led on to virtue, by the hope of bringing upon them blessing, reflected from good

too fully. If parents neglect the Word of God, disregard his sabbath, think not of his Spirit, prepare not themselves for his judgment, honour not the Redeemer whom his love hath given them—do they not by such example tempt their children to follow in the ways of sin, and so lead them into the way of punishment? Children are quick to catch excuses for their own neglect of duty, from the conduct of others: nor will they readily allow that to be wrong in themselves, which they see to be done or said by their parents. If *they* live to the world, it is little surprising that their children follow after them: and so eventually suffer for their parents' sin.

Happily, the converse of this truth holds good. What if parents are neither great, nor rich, nor learned? Suppose them to have no temporal good to leave behind them for their children? *Then* is felt the inestimable value of a good example. *Then*, blessing is upon the children for their parents' sake. Precept exemplified strengthens their faith, and confirms their hope. Having seen the power of religion operating upon the hearts and conduct of the honoured dead, they hold it, so bequeathed to them, a treasure beyond price.

"Wilt thou seek comfort by partaking of the holy communion of the body and blood of Christ?" was once asked of a dying mother by her son. "Yes! yes!" was the quick, and almost agitated reply. "Yes! for well do I *now* remember; though for long years the memory of the fact has slept: well do I now remember how my own dying mother sought and found comfort in that holy ordinance. O her goodness! How brightly did it shine around that dark hour of sorrow. Her words still breathe counsel and love—'Children, dear children, seek the Lord early, you will find Him late. He is the bread of life.'—Therefore would I seek Him now; and eat of that bread of life, of which they who eat hunger no more."

Reader! thus it is that a holy obedience to God in parents brings sure blessing upon their children.

arents; through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ ur Lord. And can even your fond heart wish greater essing for them, than the love and favour of Almighty od; his loving-kindness and gracious protection? r is it too hard a condition for winning, through the erits of Christ, this mercy for their child, that parents ould themselves love God and keep his command-ents? Moreover, suppose no such blessing to be re-ected upon others by a holy life of faith, parents cannot rget that their own baptismal covenant binds them it, solemnly, and unreservedly. *That* devoted them God's service. *That* bound them, even to their ves' end, to serve Him faithfully—"*daily* proceeding all virtue and godliness of living." Our blessed Lord as shown, in his monitory appeal to our own reason, e inconsistency of professing faith without following up by obedience—"Why call ye me Lord, and do ot the things which I say[1]." Indeed, *not* to love God, ho first loved us; and so loved us, that He gave his ly begotten Son to die for us; would argue a low and worthy feeling; would evidence a want of gratitude, nd an absence of the best and most ennobling of our ffections. We should remember, that when He gave is his beloved Son to die for *us*, He gave Him to ie for our *children* also—"for us, and our *little ones*[2]." ay now—can you forbear loving this God, who doubly

[1] Luke vi. 36.

[2] The effect of this tender feeling towards children, influencing the eart against its own purposes, and prevailing over self-will, has eldom been more beautifully and affectingly displayed than in the ase of the patriarch Jacob, when he was required to send his loved enjamin into Egypt, as the only condition upon which his sons ould be allowed to purchase corn to save him and his family from eath: so grievous was the famine in their land. From various

blesses *you*, in blessing those so near and dear to you! Why, a stranger cannot do any the least service to our children, but our hearts warm to him. We long to thank him; to requite him his service, in proof that we are grateful! And here is one, no stranger, no fellow-creature whose sympathies might be enlisted for us, and to whom we might make compensation; no being, upon whom obligation lies to serve us, but one, with whom by nature we are at enmity; one, who might justly punish us as his enemies; one whom daily we offend, either in thought, word, or deed; yet is He one, whose mercy is so unbounded, that whilst He has pro-

causes he refused the conditions. He refused permission to take Benjamin. "My son shall *not* go down with you." (Gen. xliii. 3.) Judah stands forth. He paints the misery which would accrue to the family if no corn be purchased; he asserts the improbability of finding any except in Egypt; he repeats the hopelessness of procuring a supply, unless Benjamin stood before the ruler of the land. Jacob was still inflexible. There remained, however, one chord in his heart yet to be struck, which might respond to the touching appeal of his son. In enumerating those for the preservation of whose lives he was earnest to go down again to Egypt, Judah specifies *the children*—"that we may live and not die"—said the anxious Judah, himself a father—"both we, and thou, and also our *little ones*." Instantly the stern spirit of Jacob softened. Reckless though he were of himself, and even of his sons, men in full power of age, the patriarch yielded at once, rather than "those little ones" should perish. Their weakness, was their strength; their helplessness, their protection. Could *they* meet the misery of famine! The very thought subdued him. His heart was touched. His tenderest feelings were reached through "the little ones"—as their father endearingly termed his children.

Mother! You love your children; deeply, endearingly! Prove it, by your own truly religious life. You know the Christian's hope, that "if you love God, and keep his commandments, He will, for Jesus Christ's sake, show mercy unto you and to *your children*, for ever." O! make God their friend!

vided, of his free grace and favour, for our children, a Sanctifier and Comforter, to make them meet recipients of his mercy; and to direct and soothe them amid the difficulties and sorrows of life; has provided also a Redeemer and Advocate, to free them from the punishment of sin, and save them in the day of judgment; thus securing to them, after death, their reunion with you in the eternal world of rest, and joy, and glory. I am sure that you do love such a Being. And that Being is your God. But this grateful love is not to be a mere feeling; a mere impulse. It is to be an abiding principle, leading us to do for such a friend what his will commands, in proof that we are thankful for the benefits his mercy bestows. This is in fact the test appointed by our blessed Lord—"*If* ye *love* me, keep my *commandments*."

Thus parents have accumulated motives for a holy life. They would fain win the favour of their God for the children of their love.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

THE reverential feeling due to God, as a Spirit—incomprehensible, far beyond our imagination to conceive of his greatness and majesty, and universal presence, equally upon earth and in heaven—is to be reflected on all we *say* as well as do, in reference to Him. Even his *Name* is holy and reverent; and cannot be taken in vain by us, and we be guiltless.

With respect either to those who appeal to the name of God, *in establishing* falsehood and wrong; or

to those who dare to use it impiously; who must not grieve to think how deep and awful is the measure of their sin! They do, indeed, heap upon themselves a load of guilt, which must be either repented of with bitter tears of remorse, or meet its dreadful punishment. Even they, who use the name of God irreverently, yet without any deliberate intention to insult his truth and honour, are guilty of taking his name in vain. They forget the spirit of watchfulness which our Divine Teacher so strenuously inculcates upon them: they forget Him, who is ever present to them: are regardless of the honour due unto his name; and so offend his great majesty. But you will remind your child, that there are occasions on which even professing Christians hazard the charge of guilt in taking God's name in vain. They feel, perhaps, to have an awful dread of invoking it falsely, or unjustly, or irreverently. So far 'tis well! It is happy to be guiltless of presumptuous sins. Yet let us examine well ourselves; and consider whether, if we view this commandment, as the Gospel teaches us to view all the divine commandments, in an *extended* sense; reaching not only to the outward act, but to the very feeling and intention of the heart; we are not ourselves too often open to the charge of transgressing it—whether, even after professing God in outward reverence, we have not, virtually, taken in our lips his holy Name, and in our hearts held back the honour due unto it. You teach your child to address God under various names; to all of which are attached feelings of reverence, or love, or trust, or fear, or hope. You so address God yourself. Thus you call upon Him as your "*Lord.*" Do you obey Him as a servant his *master*, fully and freely? or do you address Him by

name, *in vain?* You name Him *Father:* where. is his honour? do you rejoice in his protection his love? do you heed his counsels and follow his nce? or do you use the name of Father *in vain?* ou name Him *Redeemer.* Is your faith fixed on Him, and Him alone, to be your advocate our mediator, your righteousness and your peace, sacrifice and your life? or do you call Him by holy name of Jesus, and call Him so *in vain?* ou name Him *Comforter?* Do you seek for find comfort to your soul from his holy aspira-; and following his godly motions, gain strength our spiritual life from the rich fountain of his ? or do you give the name, and give it *in vain?* this holy name, however, of God—Father, Son, Holy Ghost, we were all baptized; and to Him ll our prayers offered, whether for protection, ation, or sanctification. Of what vital concern it is, that when we *do* address this great Being, hallow the name by which we address Him; no irreverence there offend Him, before whom place ourselves as supplicants. And if thus the g of the heart go with the word of the lips, we gain strong guard against evil, powerful motive ood, rich consolation against sorrow. There will o rash speaking: no speaking unadvisedly with ips. We shall not dare to offend one who, as a enly Father, is alway present to punish or reward. shall cast off self-righteousness, in calling upon "the Lord, our righteousness" and our life. We lean no longer to our own understanding, but e to be led of the Holy Spirit, whom we call the our Comforter. So we may humbly trust to be

guiltless, in thought and in word, of offending against the majesty of Jehovah; and however unworthy be our offering of supplication, or penitence, or praise, still shall we not be wanting in giving the honour due unto his name. Never, *never* shall we take it in vain!

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

It was the wise and humble prayer of David, that God would "so teach him to number his days, that he might apply his heart unto wisdom." Time itself being God's gift, a right use of each passing day becomes a sacred duty with us. But there is one day, which the Lord wills to consider more peculiarly his own: and He expects, that as his own, it be observed by all men with an exclusive and jealous care: devoted in a more peculiar manner to his glory, and their own spiritual benefit. That day is termed the Sabbath—or the day of rest: commemorative of God's rest after his work of creation: for on the seventh day "God rested from all the works which He had made." Nor was this a new commandment, though specially given to Israel in the wilderness. The ordinance had been binding from the very beginning of the world: evidently coeval with the event it was appointed to commemorate. This is clear from the term used in enforcing it—"*Remember* the Sabbath-day." The language is intelligible only as in reference to something past. We cannot remember what we never knew; or renew what we never practised. The Israelites were therefore carried back to the former observance of that day—an observance, which perhaps their bondage under Pharaoh,

and the confusion consequent upon it, had for a time put aside, or at least caused to be negligently and irreverently observed. The manner in which it is to be remembered, is stated so clearly and distinctly, that it cannot be mistaken. It is to be kept HOLY. The day is to be marked not by the Rest of idleness, but by the Rest of holiness—a Rest not only from our usual habits of worldly active industry, but from worldly thoughts, and ordinary pursuits. For that day more especially let God's holy house be our resort; his holy word our study; his Holy Spirit the object of our prayers; a consciousness of his holy presence our glory and our joy; his holy worship our labour of love, and our best consolation. If *He* rested from *His* work on the Sabbath-day, shall we proudly vaunt ourselves as requiring no rest from *our* labours. Rather teach your children, that never was a divine command enjoined, more admirably calculated to meet the infirmities, and elevate the powers of a fallen and degraded nature. The Rest of the Sabbath—what a salutary pause is it in the great tide of human passion; of man's vain fears, and vain hopes, which the turmoil of each busy week accumulates! The heart, during these hours of hallowed repose, has opportunity to think what is the end of all things here below—to check what is wrong, to follow up what is right, to balance the advantages of this world, short at best, and often vain, with those of the next, enduring and precious. The one thing needful—the care of the soul—too often put aside in the conflict of worldly interests, and the excitement of active pursuits, stands, in the calm hour of holy worship, prominent; demanding and receiving all our care, and all our thoughts; and for the time

we wonder that it could ever hold only a second place in our regard. Indeed, were it not for the periodical pause given to worldly and low views, by the observance of a weekly Sabbath, earthly things would soon absorb all our activity; we should be slaves to the world; aliens from our Father, deniers of our Saviour, despisers of our Comforter: we should dishonour God, and be traitors to our souls. Whereas, sabbaths well spent—sabbaths kept holy—who shall doubt that they carry with them blessing from week to week, from year to year: the best guard to youth against its temptations; the best support, as advancing years bring the cares and troubles of life upon us; the sweetest retrospect to age, as worn down by infirmities it looks forward to an eternal sabbath above! You will further instruct the inquiring minds of your children upon this subject. You will point out to them in how striking a manner our blessed Lord, by his own example, teaches us to keep the sabbath holy. It was a day, which the Gospel history shows that He and his disciples observed with habitual regularity. And if He relaxed the stringent rules respecting it, enjoined by the Jewish law, they affected only the outward observance: He drew still closer the bonds which on that day unite the soul to its heavenly Father. He relaxed no part of our duty to God, whilst He enlarged and sanctified the fulfilment of our duty to man[1]. He showed that works of mercy to the creatures of a God of mercy desecrated not the sabbath rest; offended not Him, who loveth mercy rather than sacrifice; but that

[1] Mark ii. 27; Luke xiii. 15.

rather on this day, more especially, we should fulfil each appointed duty with a holier zeal. You will thus inculcate upon your children the value of an habitual reverence for the sabbath. You will lead them, as well by precept as by example, to keep the day holy; both in public and in private. You will teach them, that when the house of God is opened for divine worship, to be wilfully, and without necessity, absent from the congregation, is to withdraw from blessing. You can appeal to your own experience in proof of peaceful hours of holy rest passed in that holy house. You there found a resting place, from which the world, with all its troubles, all its perplexities, all its various difficulties, was excluded -where in the darkest hour of affliction there was light; and where, amid the dazzling temptations of prosperity, there was safety and repose. It has been when so worshipping that you have felt, in full force, the ecstatic language of the patriarch—"This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." You can further interest the youthful hearts of your children in this service, by directing them to contemplate the piety of Jesus in his youth; and his own uniform observance of the sabbath. The holy and exclusive repose of it, appointed as it was for God's honour and man's benefit, was by Him never broken, save to work some work, which should exalt that honour, or enlarge that benefit [1].

[1] Luke xiii. 13. 15. 17.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

THE fourth commandment having closed what is termed the first table of the law, comprehending those duties which we owe more immediately to God; the six remaining commandments constitute the second table, and relate more especially to our neighbour. Of this our Lord declared it like unto the first in authority and obligation [1]. Under the Gospel, therefore, each table is binding upon us. When a heavenly host announced the Saviour's birth, they proclaimed the event as confirming our obligation to the fulfilment alike of our duty to man, and our duty to God —"Glory to *God* in the highest! and on earth peace, good-will towards *men*;" was the angels' song. Fallen man was not only to be reconciled to his God, but to be at peace with his fellow-creatures! And if all men kept the commandments, such *would* be their blessed state, with respect both to their God and to their neighbour. Even this world's ordering would be not less to man's peace, than to God's glory.

The foundation of all social obligation being that which exists between parents and children, the commandment enforcing filial obedience stands first in rank among those of the second table.

The love which a child bears towards its parent is the feeling of nature; and it ought to strengthen when, as he advances from infancy, his mind opens to understand the *added* causes for this love. Indeed, whenever, as a mother, you remind your child of his helplessness in early years, before he was conscious of

[1] Matt. xxii. 39.

kind and anxious care; and refer him to your former ministrations for his preservation and comfort; he cannot but feel the full weight of all he owes you. And when in those hours of tenderness, which a mother's pious skill fills up with converse applicable to his age, you tell him of early years; and picture to him past scenes—when you speak of hours in which you hung over his couch in the season of sickness, weeping to witness his heavy eye, and gentle moan, and hopeless weakness: or haply recall your deep and heartfelt prayer of gratitude as you watched the symptoms of returning health, and caught the first smile, lighting up the faded cheek, and giving token, like the rainbow in some dark cloud, that the storm had passed, that the covenant of mercy was remembered, and that life and joy should return again—how *then* does filial love expand his heart! When he still advances onward to a clearer apprehension of the blessing of parental affection, you will bring forward to his notice how many sacrifices his parents have made for his well-doing. Nor is there a more interesting subject for our meditation, than the noble spirit with which parents generally—in the highest and the lowest station, each according to their means—live a life of self-denial for their children's sake. To give the children instruction; to supply them with food and clothing "convenient for them[1];" to place them well amid the struggles of life; studying their best interests in time and in eternity; supplying comforts of which they deprive themselves; restraining them, though to

[1] That is—such things as are adapted to the station in life to which it may have pleased God to call them.

the appearance of severity, from what their higher experience knows would be harmful; and by a gentle compulsion keeping them in the straight path, which leadeth unto life—to do all this, evidences a self-denying tenderness and a devotedness of affection which must produce love in return; must bind a child to his parents by a bond so tender and so holy, that God speaks of himself as united to us by the like bond[1]. Hitherto, indeed, the world and its temptations having been untried by the youthful Christian, and the passions of his own heart yet dormant, filial love has no check to its ardour. But as in the common ordering of nature, filial dependence upon parental care generally weakens, so the mere *feeling* of affection would lose strength, but that the love which binds children to parents is to be changed from a feeling to a *principle*; rising above the caprices of temper and the change of circumstances, and so uniting their hearts that death alone can separate them. It is theirs to *honour* their parents.

Moreover, this duty never ceases. Even when children have advanced to the age of manhood, *honour* towards parents is still their bounden duty. And he must, indeed, be cold of heart who can think it possible to do too much in return for all the persevering love of parents towards himself. Even suppose it to happen — and such things unhappily are — that the conduct of parents is unworthy—that there is neither affection to win love, nor virtue to ensure respect. However they be regarded by others, *honour* from their children is secured to them by a voice from

[1] Isaiah xlix. 15.

heaven: and the command in such case is lightened by the promise annexed to it. Nor can we imagine a more interesting object than a good and dutiful child so struggling between feeling and principle. Whoso, against all the discouragements which worldly or irreligious conduct may present, *honoureth* his father and his mother, "his days shall be long in the land which the Lord his God giveth him." Thus blessed is filial honour! Its recompense is heaven [1].

But since all human authority has its origin in parental authority, the principle involved in this commandment branches out into all the relations of life; and is applicable, virtually, to all who are in subjection: sustaining through every gradation of civil and social life, from the voice of a father to his children, to that of a sovereign to his people, the main

[1] It is true, that the promise was originally applicable to the Israelites, and conveyed a hope, to dutiful children, of sharing the land of Canaan—the promised rest—after long sojourn in the wilderness. But our Divine Teacher has with sufficient frequency and clearness pointed out to us the analogy between the Church of God then and the Church of Christ now, to prevent any difficulty in applying this promise evangelically. The servants of Christ are the Israel of God; the world is the wilderness, a place for their sojourning, not our home; and heaven is the promised land, which the Lord our God shall give to the faithful—"the rest, which remaineth for the people of God."

As against filial irreverence the Holy Scriptures denounce vengeance in language of unwonted severity—"The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Prov. xxx. 17.—So it is difficult to imagine a higher proof of the union of religious feeling and religious principle, than when the pious offices of filial duty are performed to unworthy parents—their failings screened from others; and if observed at all, observed only to be avoided and mourned.

spring of well-being to society, so admirably stated in the apostle's injunction, of "giving honour to whom honour is due."

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

THIS and the following commandments enforce the general duties of men to each other, universally. They begin by guarding against injury to human life: because life is our most valuable possession. Other injuries between man and man, if they cannot be fully compensated, may be mitigated, more or less: violence may be atoned for; plunder restored; even calumny shamed, and put aside: and so with every injury short of taking life: but take life!—not all the wealth, and power, and wisdom of the world can bring it back. Not all the remorse of the wretched murderer can restore the treasure he has rifled. He cuts off his fellow-creature, not only from his enjoyments, but from his duties; from his opportunities of usefulness towards others, of improvement to himself, and of awakened preparation to meet his God in judgment. Society, too, is alarmed and injured. Mutual confidence is broken, amid lamentation, and mourning, and woe. The image of God is defaced, and his will and counsel are set at nought. It is against such, that the Gospel speaks in language of unwonted strength and terrible force. "No murderer hath eternal life [1]."

[1] 1 John iii. 15. The law of the land, however, justifies the taking human life in such cases as the divine law seems to prescribe. It is God's own law, that murderers should die the death. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by *man* shall his blood be shed." Gen. ix. 6.

These are the dreadful results when life is taken designedly, and of purpose, and without the authority of the law. But when one man cause another's death *unintentionally*, then how differently does God deal with the survivor! how mercifully! how tenderly! "For *him*, who killeth his neighbour *unawares*," were provided "cities of *refuge* to flee unto [1]." In what affecting contrast stands this compassion towards the afflicted heart of one so circumstanced, with the denunciation against the wilful slayer!

The Gospel, however, which is the perfection of the moral law, as it is the abrogation of the ceremonial law, traces murder to its source; and finding its origin in the heart, boldly avers, that even where there is no overt act of personal injury, the *guilt* of murder attaches to the *thought* which compasses the act. So inseparable is the connection between an evil thought and an evil action, that "whoso *hateth* his brother is a murderer [2]." Your children will at once see the danger of allowing themselves in unkind feeling towards each other, or indeed towards any. If circumstances arise, giving offence and calling up in their hearts a feeling of anger, they must put it aside at once; lest, by brooding over it, they foster it into strength and action. Many an offence, in itself trivial, assumes an importance not its own, if dwelt upon and pondered. One harsh thought is heaped upon another, and so occupies the mind, that enmity gradually usurps the place of harmony and love; and the spirit of hatred strengthens, till it either wants

[1] Numb. xxxv. 11. [2] 1 John iii. 15.

but opportunity to accomplish its revenge, or is deterred from its purpose only by fear of punishment. But the sin, being of the heart, is equally condemned by that Being, to whom all hearts are open, who judgeth our thoughts as well as our actions, and who will punish or reward accordingly. This view of the commandment is highly important. It becomes a powerful check upon that ardent temperament of youthful minds, which if not thus regulated, might fancy it manly to show the violence of revenge for the cruelty of injustice or injury. Nay, it gives to their ardour a noble object and a safe direction. Hence, our blessed Lord, when laying down the principles of a true sense of honour, draws a distinction, by which the highest and the noblest spirits may so regulate their feelings, that whilst they win the admiration of men, they gain the approval of their God. Ordinary minds, acting only upon impulse, and looking only to the present moment, love their friends and hate their enemies. Minds of a firmer stamp and higher views hate *none* among their fellow-creatures. They strive, with an ambition which their Divine Master's example has sanctified, to act as becometh children, whose "Father is in heaven;" for he maketh "his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust [1]." And nothing will sooner promote this good will, than carefully abstaining from a proud quickness at taking offence. Direct then the attention of your children to the more striking passages in Holy Writ, which

[1] Matt. v. 45.

urge the duty of gentleness under injury or offence. Direct them to "follow after the things which make for peace[1];" "to be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, of one heart, of one soul." If in attaining this Christian principle they find much difficulty; if it be arduous to throw down the strong-holds which pride and anger have built up in their hearts; if it be mortifying to cast down the imaginations which there have taken their stand—the glory of revenge, and the sweetness of successful retaliation—tell them from God, that "he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city[2];" and "he that is slow to anger is better than he that is mighty." If victory be always glorious, how bright the glory of that victory which is obtained over themselves! Thus, by God's grace aiding your endeavours, your children will learn to obey the *spirit* of this commandment; and as they progress through a world of temptation and trial, full oft will their hearts swell with gratitude to your memory as they practise the lessons of self-denial and self-control, taught and impressed upon their minds by you in early days, and now duly valued. Behold them, when in the bitterness of grief perhaps for injuries inflicted or justice withheld, they return no evil for evil; no railing for railing: if anger glance on them, they allow it not to abide; they forgive as they would be forgiven; and anger, and hatred, and malice, which, if yielded to, might have led them captive to woe and death, now lose at once their triumph and their misery.—They remember the voice of their mother!

[1] Romans xiv. 19. [2] Proverbs xvi. 32.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

THE well-ordering of all society, and the preservation of peace and mutual good-will in it, depend upon obedience to this commandment. It is the law of God which unites man and wife together in a sacred bond, which none can break, without guilt before Him. Indeed, it is to the pure and holy principle established by it that we owe those endearing ties of relationship, which link together children of the same parents by a cord of love, which no troubles of a life of trial can separate. Poverty cannot weaken it, riches cannot relax it. Where are the brothers, where the sisters, whom affliction does not unite in a closer bond of affection? where the family, who do not double their joys and diminish their sorrows by sharing together the one or the other? And this mutual loving-kindness branches out gradually into all the relations of life; as they are in nearer or more distant degree. But dissolve the marriage bond—and this great blessing to mankind, this melioration of our fallen nature, is lost. Instead of that family-love and harmony, which is a foretaste of heaven, there would remain mutual recrimination, or mutual indifference: the guilty sunk deep in shame; the injured, in woe. But this commandment is not to be considered as applicable only to the sin of breaking the marriage vow. Our blessed Lord—who came to fulfil and perfect the law, and no longer confining its injunctions to the mere letter, applied each commandment spiritually—carried out its provisions to the inmost recesses of the heart. He taught that this commandment is to be viewed in its most extended sense. The spirit of his warning is so

awakening, that whilst it prohibits the indulgence of irregular desires, and expects a subjugation of evil inclinations, it infers plainly that all the feelings are to be governed by that temperance and prudence, that purity and reverence towards God, which the dictates of reason approve, and the laws of religion universally demand. Does not reason itself speak on this subject, in language which might reach any heart, not hopelessly hardened by the deceitfulness of sin? Even her voice points to experience, in proof that the wages of such sin is death—death to honour, death to peace, death to all those sympathies which render this life less toilsome as a life of trial, and by the exercise of which in our families on earth, we are trained, by God's grace, for meeting at last as one great family in heaven. Let loose the passions, and behold the ravages of this death! Behold the inexpressible misery which would follow! Mothers, as they bent over their helpless offspring, with all a mother's absorbing love and anxious yearnings for their support and welfare—alas! how often would the chilness of despair thrill the heart with agony! No father's tender care could be *claimed* for them! There would be no legal obligation upon the individual to support those, towards whom, as the offspring of promiscuous intercourse, he owned no relationship. For, however compassion might in some cases interpose for support and protection, it is not one of the least dreadful consequences of the sin against which this commandment is directed, that its general tendency is to harden the heart; to suspend every good and high and honourable feeling, and foster the basest and lowest. Recklessness of this commandment of God, induces recklessness to the

welfare of man—the selfishness of sin destroying those sympathies, which, whilst they are of heaven, become no weak aid in mitigating the ills of earth. Children, who in the holy marriage state, are their parents' best delight and joy, their strength and honour, would too often be looked upon by the forlorn and forsaken mother as her misery and shame. Add to these considerations the further and stronger views to which religion leads us; and the commandment speaks in a language which none can misunderstand, except those who "*will not* hear." Strict indeed are the precepts of holiness on this subject, and strong the motives for heeding them which the Gospel sets before us. We are reminded of our near relation to the all-present, though invisible God; the all-powerful Lord, though the all-loving Father—and shall neither the claims of *duty*, nor the voice of *gratitude* prevail! "Know ye not," saith the apostle, "that ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost?" Moreover, we are all strangers and pilgrims here on earth, with the hope of reaching our home at last in heaven. And doth not the Lord of heaven himself remind us by his word, that "every one that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as God is pure[1]?" St. Paul's animated and impressive language on this subject may well sink deep into our hearts—"Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye, therefore, partakers with them." "Walk as children of light, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness[2]."

[1] 1 John iii. 3.

[2] Ephes. v. 6.

Whoso then would "love life, and see good days," and fear no ill, "let them eschew evil, and do good." Let them keep the commandment, not in the letter only, but in spirit and in truth: so may the Father of light — "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named[1]"—guide them into all truth and holiness; preserving them blameless here on earth, that at last He may receive them as his own, and admit them, parents and children, to be hereafter of his family in heaven.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

Security of property is one of the surest proofs of a well-ordered state of society, and is the fruitful source of prosperity and mutual confidence between man and man. But human laws alone could never effect this good end. Of wicked minds, some there are, who deterred, perhaps, from that species of dishonesty which human laws can punish, would yet not scruple at dishonesty in cases which they thought those laws could not reach. Open robbery they fear to commit; and they stand in awe of that punishment which awaits the offender when violence and wrong are detected. With a strange inconsistency, whilst their hearts shame not to conceive the sin, they shame at the thought of its detection and exposure. But there are a thousand modes of injuring the property of others, and so depriving them of what is their own, which human laws cannot reach. How happy for society, that the command—"Thou shalt not steal"—

[1] Ephes. iii. 15.

has gone forth from the throne of *God* himself—a command, therefore, which not only reaches to the more glaring flagrancy of wrong by robbery and open violence, but restrains from all manner of injustice, covert or open, by which our neighbour's property may be injured or depreciated. From that God there is no escape. Secret fraud is open to *his* all-seeing eye, as clearly as the most open robbery to the eye of man. It is therefore that in those parts of his Holy Word, which are written for the due regulation of social life, He has explicitly declared, that all fraud and cunning, applied to deceive our neighbour and injure his property, directly or indirectly, is *sin* even against *Himself*. Hence, "a false balance is abomination to the *Lord*[1]," and "a just weight and balance are the *Lord's*[2]." In all cases, therefore, connected with buying and selling and the transfer of property generally, it is evident that a higher than human authority checks the wrong, and a higher than human judgment will punish it. In reference to this extended application of the commandment, the Scripture is express: "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small: thou shalt not have in thy house divers measures, a great and a small." "All that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an *abomination* unto the *Lord thy God*[3]."—Thus are men taught that to steal, either openly or covertly, directly or indirectly, is to offend, not only against man, but against God: and further, that though there be many ways of wrong and robbery, which human prudence is unable to detect and human laws unable to punish,

[1] Prov. xi. 1. [2] Ibid. xvi. 11.
[3] Deut. xxv. 13. 16.

there are none so secret but that the eye of an omniscient God seeth them; none so cunning but that his presence detecteth them; and none so remote but that He will punish them. What more availing consideration than this can there be, to cause that "no man go beyond, or defraud his neighbour in any matter, because that the *Lord* is the avenger of all such[1]." Where the unjust escape the eye of man, and their sin cannot be reached by human laws, there God detects them; there *his* judgment follows them. How deeply should this truth be impressed upon the hearts of us all! What a safeguard to our soul is the thought, that God's eye is over us, to watch if we wrong our neighbour; not only when detection may overtake us, but even when detection, by human means, seem impossible[2]!

St. Paul, in his memorable address to the Ephesians on this subject, traces the sin to its frequent cause, *idleness*. He argues, that if men would be industrious in an honest calling, they would remove themselves from want, ensure a supply of such things

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 6.

[2] Those who, like servants for instance, are placed in a situation of responsibility, should always have in view this certainty of the constant presence and universal superintendence of God over human affairs. They will so learn, when any thing is placed in their trust, or left to their care, religiously to fulfil their trust, and consider themselves responsible to Almighty God for a due execution of it. In proportion also to the confidence which is necessarily reposed in them, they will act as under the all-seeing eye of an ever-present God, and never be tempted themselves to take away, or receive from others what they know is not their own: nor will they conceal any dishonest act in others, which may come to their knowledge, lest by so sanctioning the wrong and robbery, they first partake the sin in the sight of God, and at last share its punishment before men.

as be needful for them in their several stations, and so have no temptation to take to themselves that which is their neighbour's. "Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him *labour*, *working* with his hands the thing which is *good*, that he may have *to give* to him that needeth." Indeed it is a general principle, which you cannot too earnestly impress upon the mind of your child, that the surest way, under the Divine blessing, of escaping the sins forbidden in the commandments, is to strive after an attainment of their corresponding virtues; and to receive all God's commandments against evil, as not only forbidding the sin, but as enjoining the virtue.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

It not unfrequently happens, that in performing our several public duties we are called upon to sacrifice private feeling. When, for instance, the cause of truth compels us, in a court of justice, to bear witness against our neighbour, for some or other wrong committed by him[1]; the duty, though confessedly imperative, is not performed without disquiet and reluctance: the pain being of course in proportion to the nearness of regard in which we may happen to stand towards the offender. Or suppose the parties to be strangers to us, and therefore comparatively indifferent, still there is a distressing feeling in being the means, however indirectly, of carrying pain, and perhaps ruin, to them—ruin to their character and

[1] By our neighbour here is meant our fellow-creature.

name; and, it may be, to life also, if the offence be so highly criminal that the law of the land requires the sacrifice of life. Even for an enemy, if he be in jeopardy of suffering for offence, our hearts are pained; and if called to witness against him, how instantly all our anger, just as perhaps it is, goes away, and yields its place to pity and compassion. With what reverence then should we proceed, when necessity compels to bear witness against our neighbour! How religiously should we take heed that we "bear *no false* witness against him!" and perhaps it were difficult to find any, unless among the most abandoned and reprobate of mankind[1], who would deliberately and of purposed malice stand the awful risk of bearing *false* witness openly before man in a solemn public appeal to justice; "for a false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape[2]." But it is not merely thus that men bear false witness; nor is the injunction confined to this open violation of truth. The commandment takes a far wider range, and applies both more extensively and more closely than may at first appear. Not only by direct falsehood do men bear false witness, but they bear false witness indirectly also, by withholding true testimony: for where duty demands that we speak to the truth, silence is guilt; and by forbearing true witness, we share the guilt of the false witness. Indeed, there are numerous modes in society by which persons are guilty of breaking this commandment, and which occur in daily intercourse. When in conversation

[1] Yet even this indignity was not spared our suffering Redeemer. Some were found to "bear *false* witness" even against *Him*.

[2] Prov. xix. 5.

upon the good or ill qualities of our fellow-creatures, we, without reason, disparage the one, or magnify the other, we assuredly bear false witness[1]. When we hear the absent vilified, their virtues slightly glanced at, their infirmities blazoned forth; and no other end answered than the gratification of envy, or the mean wish to triumph over another, we know that the speaker beareth false witness against them: without foundation lowering what excellence they may have; charging them, perhaps, with faults which do not belong to them; and disallowing such good qualities as they may possess. Care indeed must be taken, that whilst we hold ourselves in Christian charity, and think no evil of others, we yet palliate no sin. Under due regard to the spirit of the Gospel, evil must be exposed; lest, if not held out as a warning to the good, it be caught at as an example to the evil. If we carry out the application of *this* commandment as we have done of the rest, we shall find it branch out into all the various dealings with man in social life. For instance, to lie, in order to conceal a fault, is, in fact, to bear false witness; for our testimony has for its object to withdraw attention from the truth. Lying closes every avenue of safety in mutual intercourse. Justice is perverted; no wickedness can be punished; virtue is at perpetual hazard. It is very important that you early imbue the mind of your child with this extended application of the commandment. You thus train him to more elevated tone of mind as a member of society. Whilst the worldly are reckless of their neighbour's reputation, so long as

[1] See the Note, p. 191.

they can injure his fame without the charge of *direct* false testimony on their own part; bringing a slur upon his character, yet free from any positive act of injustice towards him—the Christian holds the guilt of covert or open falsehood equal. Remembering that not only the success of almost every thing in this world depends upon character, but that a wound to reputation is many a time a fatal wound to honour, to peace, to life itself; he rises above the thought of injuring, by open falsehood, by surmise, or even by silence, the reputation of others [1]. If there be wrong, he openly and candidly reproves the wrong-doer; but he holds it the act alike of a coward and a criminal to backbite and to slander—combining the meanness of a base mind, and the daring of a reckless one: for not only "he that uttereth slander is a fool [2]," mean and pitiful; but He whose power to punish is as sure as his word which threatens punishment—*He* hath recorded his vengeance against the slanderers in language so strong, so awful; threatening their utter exclusion from God and his presence; that none but the most reckless brave it—"Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour—he shall be *cut off* [3]." If there-

[1] It is the slanderous tongue which so often disturbs the peace of families: blasting the fame of the deserving; sullying, by malicious inferences, the reputation of the innocent; destroying the comfort of the unoffending; and wearing away in anxiety and misery the heavy hours of the injured. If there be an offence, which lays up for the offender bitter regrets for a death-bed, it is slander! Indeed, ere a man can yield himself to this sin, he must cast from him all feeling of Christian charity and Christian responsibility. Slander cannot for a moment consist with religion.

[2] Prov. x. 18. There is no possibility of restoring a good name.

[3] Psalm ci. 5.

fore, in future years, your child ever be placed, by duty, where he is called to bear witness against his neighbour, he will perform the painful duty steadily and conscientiously as unto God: yet not without feelings of pain towards the offender. But to bear *false* witness he would *scorn*, if he dare—for as he needeth no false reputation, he is not careful to add to his own by detracting from another's; and he has been taught early to hold the commandments of his God, not in the letter only, but in the spirit. Hence, when forbidden to bear "false witness against his neighbour," he receives the words as a solemn warning against "whispering," and backbiting, and defamation, and slander, and every word which may either hinder a neighbour's success in life, wound his fame, or injure his peace. The good name and happiness of others are as dear to him as his own—so nobly does charity expand the kindly affections—and he feels it a *religious* duty to uphold the one and promote the other to the utmost of his power, both by word and in deed; by example and monition; for honour's sake towards man, and for conscience sake towards God. He will not have forgotten your patient teaching, your earnest exhortation, your unwearied iteration of God's word, that whilst "lying lips are abomination to the Lord, they that deal truly are his delight." The hopeful prayer, too, with which he was wont to hear you close your instruction—"Grant, O heavenly Father, this spirit of truth and honour to my child, that so his mother's heart may sing for joy"—*that* prayer shall oft be remembered when you will have passed away.—To such fond remembrances how many trace their *virtue* and their happiness!

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

In this last commandment we are conducted to the source whence flow those waters of death, to check which the former commandments of this second table, prohibitory of injury to our neighbour, are directed. It is by first coveting what is not their own, that men are led on to wrong and robbery. If all were contented in their stations, and satisfied with such advantages as God may have seen fit to bestow upon them, half the miseries of life would be unknown, because half its crimes would be avoided. Even godliness itself is gain, only where there is contentment [1]: for discontent arises from envy, and the root of envy is pride. Now, there is no sure remedy for pride, except a christian view of our fallen, corrupt, and unworthy nature; and a christian conviction that what

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 6. "But godliness, *with contentment*, is great gain." The apostle's argument here evinces a deep knowledge of the springs of human action, and a thorough insight into the nature of their working. Suppose a professed knowledge of the truth of the Gospel, a professed acceptance of its doctrines, an outward fulfilment of its ordinances, an avowed sense of God's presence, a declared love for the Saviour's word and trust in his Spirit—all will not profit, either as to peace or holiness, unless the mind be at rest with respect to the state of life in which God, the great Disposer of events, may have placed us. We gain no rest whilst our heart is longing for what is unattained; we can practise no charity whilst we grieve at the well-doing of those towards whom it is due; we can reap no comfort from communing with God whilst we are inwardly murmuring at our own lot, and envying another's. There is no gain to the soul in a profession of godliness, whilst the spirit of love and peace, and humility and contentment, which it inculcates, is far from us.

ever evils happen to us, they are "those evils which we most *righteously deserve!*" When a man "thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think," he no sooner sees others more prosperous and more highly favoured than himself, than he looks upon them with envy; ready for any aggression by which he may possess what he covets: for such is the cold selfishness of pride, that it bears not to view another's joy, without repining. There are many evil feelings among men, and envy gives added strength to them all. "Wrath is cruel; and anger is outrageous: but who is able to stand against envy[1]?" saith the Scripture; since envy excites anger; anger, hatred; hatred, malice; till cruelty triumphs. Thus "for *envy*, his enemies delivered" the unoffending Jesus "unto death." This baneful feeling, moreover, if it fail in causing misery to others, to the individual himself brings shame and wretchedness. Well has the wise man termed envy, "the rottenness to the bones"—undermining the strength of life. Shame, too, in a signal manner marks this sin. The envious man is ashamed of avowing even to his own mind that he is actuated by a feeling so base. Revenge pleads for itself some injury inflicted, some injustice, some aggression, which, rousing the passions, leads them on, in an unguarded moment, to vengeance. True, that plea consisteth not with our duty to God or man! Still, of even that, or such like semblance of palliation, the envious is deprived. *He* bears unprovoked malice. They, whom he envies, have done him no wrong. That they have advantages which he possesses not, is no

[1] Prov. xxvii. 4.

fault of theirs. Or, suppose them wicked and undeserving in God's sight, he may be sorry, as David was, to "see the ungodly in such prosperity; in no misfortune like other folk; neither plagued like other men[1]," yet he may surely leave them to that Judge, who will hereafter "judge righteous judgment," when every wicked Dives and every patient Lazarus shall have their just and final recompense. He who covets, sins against himself, by destroying his own peace of mind; he sins against his neighbours by not allowing them to enjoy in peace the benefits which Heaven's bounty may have bestowed upon them; and, by murmuring at the dispensations of the great moral Governor of the universe, he sins against his God. With the Christian there can be no coveting. Such is the transitory nature of all *earthly* advantages, that it can never be worth his soul's hazard to sin by coveting *them*; and the advantages of heaven are held forth equally to him and to all men, to the poor and the rich, the great and the lowly. The gospel, in its glory as in its grace, is free to all! The Lord of life hath opened the kingdom of heaven to *all* believers. If then there be no coveting our neighbour's goods, there will be no breaking the commandment, by which social life is held together. The Christian is contented with his own.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"What dost thou chiefly learn by these commandments?"

Though our religious and social duties are so closely united, that wilful offence against our neighbour is an

[1] Psalm lxxiii. 5.

offence against our God, yet it hath pleased the Almighty so to frame the commandments on which those duties rest, that each duty should be specified: not so defined that offenders may escape on any point not literally enjoined, yet marked with sufficient distinctness to prevent any necessary misunderstanding or misapplication of them. As they range themselves under two heads, which are called the two tables of the Law, the Church sums up, in a very beautiful and striking manner, the instruction which each table supplies [1]; in order to impress more forcibly upon the minds of the children, what they "*chiefly* learn by these commandments."

"My duty towards God is . . . . . all the days of my life."

We first learn to "*believe* in God." All around us—the heaven with its glories, and the earth with its bounty, and the sea in its majesty—all around us prove that there is a God who made them and us: and his word declares of Him that He is *one only God*. So wonderful, however, is this Being in his various attributes, that our feelings towards Him are of a mingled character; those of a good child towards a parent. We fear to offend Him in his power, which must be supreme. We love to approach Him in his goodness, which is ever over us and all things. And this united feeling of reverence and affection can admit no limitation. We "*fear him and we love him, with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul, all our strength:*"

[1] Refer to the note in p. 158.

reason and feeling alike dedicate to Him. The object of our fear and love being infinite, all we can do must come short, not only of what we ought to do, but what we would wish to do: yet it is our delight both in our public and private devotion, to "*worship him and give him thanks.*" No cares so perplexing, but that we "*put our whole trust in him;*" no sorrow so overwhelming, but that we "*call upon him*" in earnest supplication. Under all circumstances, of sorrow or of joy, of fear or of hope, we learn to "*honour his holy name and his word*"—that name into which we have been baptized, according to his word; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We glory to own Him, the one only God, revealed to us, as God the Father, who created and preserved us; God the Son, who redeemed us; God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth us. The fruits of this faith and love will be a holy and uniform obedience. We shall serve Him not with our lips only but in our lives; not only on his own holy day, but every day, for every day is his; not only when wearied with the world's dull vanities, disappointed of its hopes, or subdued by its cares; not only when enemies oppress us and persecute us, and wear out our hearts with heaviness, not only in seasons of sickness and sorrow; not only when we have none else to flee to but our God—but "*truly;*" uniformly; whether in sorrow or in joy, in riches or in poverty, in sickness or in health —"we shall serve him *all the days of our life.*"

The Church, having provided this summary of instruction, derived from the first table of the Law, adds another, in reference to the second; extending the application of each commandment, here also, from

the letter to the spirit[1]. Thus she teaches, that though parental authority alone is specified in the fifth commandment, yet as that is the foundation of all authority, so the command to honour our father and our mother, is virtually a command to honour all whose relative position, either naturally or socially, places them above us. We are to "*do unto all men as we would they should do unto us*," were we in their position or they in ours; therefore we "*love our neighbour as ourselves*." First, however, we owe to "*our father and mother, love, honour, succour*." During the inexperience of youth, how gladly and how trustingly do we cling to the support of a father! How tenderly, how fondly do we repose on the warm and unwearying affection of a mother!—How entirely do we *love* them! When we advance in years, and learn from enjoyment of their society, to rejoice more and more in the inestimable blessing of parents preserved to us, then to

[1] The reader will patiently bear with me in thus leading a mother to expatiate upon the topics which the Church presents to our notice in her *summary* of the commandments; for though they have in part been considered in the explanation of the specific enactments contained in the commandments themselves, repetition may be excused, where earnestness is imperative; and as long as practical piety—a life of honesty and honour upon Christian principles—be required from all the followers of Him, in whom we believe, so long a mother need not fear repeating her instruction, line upon line, precept upon precept, till the minds of her children be thoroughly imbued with the important truth, that as to take God's commandments in their mouths, and do them not, is to add sin to sin, so to believe and to do them, is to lay up for themselves blessing. For though the highest obedience, and the noblest self-denial, can never claim merit or reward, yet so necessary are they in the sight of that gracious Being, who, here our only Saviour, will hereafter be our judge, that without them, *faith* itself is *dead*. Refer to p. 158, ch. xx.

the love we bear them, is added reverence; *then*, we *honour* them. If, when they grow old, infirmities press hard upon them; if misfortune overtake them, and their earthly comforts be diminished—their infirmities and sorrows we hold sacred: and as we loved them in the sunny hours of our youth, and to love added honour when we learned more highly to prize our blessings, so when their evil days come, we find our delight and our joy in supplying all their wants to the utmost of our power. We surround them with comforts; and, never wearying to show gratitude for all their affection past, dutifully *succour* them. At length we proceed to take our appointed part in the world; and whether our state be high or low, become members of the great family of our country. Since, therefore, religion teaches us to acknowledge our king to be the father of his people, you will instruct your children that upon this same principle of filial duty, enjoined as it is by Heaven, they "*honour and obey the king*[1]."

[1] You will do well early to imbue the minds of your children with feelings of affection and regard towards their sovereign. The holy Scriptures teach that true religion and loyalty ever go hand in hand. The Spirit of God it is which unites them inseparably:—"Fear God; honour the king." Indeed sovereigns, as they justly claim from their subjects due honour and obedience, so do they surely requite that honour, and reward that obedience. Cold at least must the heart be, which warms not with the thought of their anxious care, their unceasing watchfulness, their unwearying solicitude for their people's welfare. What in this world can compensate them? Splendour and power, dazzling though they be to the beholder, soon weary the possessor. Far higher considerations sustain them under their weight of responsibility. They believe that the hearts of kings are under God's rule and governance; they therefore trust that so long as by their striving and their prayers, they "study to preserve His people committed to their charge, in wealth, peace, and godliness"—so long He will in answer to those prayers so animate their

You will cherish in their hearts from their earliest years a feeling of affection and reverence towards their sovereign, making them to understand that he is parentally engaged in labouring for their good. Honouring the king, they will likewise obey "*all that are put in authority under him.*" And as in a christian community the individual is trained for a right fulfilment of public duties and civil responsibilities by the anxious care and prudent instruction bestowed by parents and others who may be in the place of parents, your children will learn by this commandment to have a religious regard and reverence for *all* their instructors, under whatever title they may be recognised—to "*submit themselves to all their governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters* [1];" and to "*order*

counsels with wisdom, and so prosper all their endeavours with success, that the people shall "faithfully serve, honour, and humbly obey them; according to his holy ordinance:" their course marked with peace and quietness; happy under the protection of Heaven, exalted among the nations in righteousness, and known throughout the world as the people of God. Thus the Church instructs her sons in Christian morals, as well as in Christian doctrine; and whilst she leads them to principles of obedience and reverence, loyalty and truth, she trains them to whatever is brave and devoted in defence of them.

[1] This is a good opportunity to show your children how reasonably the spiritual pastor of the flock looks for their regard and love. For what is his office? His it is to raise a voice, as from heaven, making known to men the will of Him who dwelleth there. His it is, by that voice, to bend the proud of heart to the dust as vile and miserable sinners; his, to raise the humble and meek; his, to comfort the heart of the contrite; his, to animate with more ardent zeal the devotion of the pious yet lowly heart; teach it to tower alike above the glory and the shame of the world; his it is to aid each soul committed to his charge, in bearing patiently the ills and the trials of this life, and to sustain their fainting spirits by the inspiring *hopes* and elevating prospects of the next. The tender hearts of

themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters." Thus society finds its best defence from the Gospel of

children may be easily led to feel how a life, engaged in labours so arduous, may fairly look for some of its consolations from the kindly spirit in which its labours are received. The labourer in God's vineyard himself alone can tell the depth of anxiety, the fearful and almost overwhelming feeling which sometimes comes over him, when after all his toil and watchfulness some cases occur when he *seems* to have toiled and watched in vain. Admirably does our Church pray, that the people may receive the word, delivered by their ministers, "with pure affection." This feeling induces at once a due reception of the Word they preach, as containing a solemn message from heaven, and a tender consideration of the infirmities which may stamp the individual to whom the message is entrusted Hence, though as St. Paul frankly avows of himself, and of all other, whether Apostles, or others their successors, the ministers of the Word; that all are fallible, "men of like passions" with those amongst whom they minister; you will show your dear children, that the virtue of the blessed Gospel continues the same, in all its power and purity; that therefore no unworthiness in the minister must weaken their faith in the holy doctrines he promulgates, or lessen their obligation to obey the divine precepts he would enforce. Though you might wish perhaps in one minister more gentleness, in another more energy, and in all generally some excellences, which might render them more efficient and more acceptable to their fellow servants in the Lord's household; you will remember that of the Apostles themselves, some were of gentle, some of ardent temperament; some humble, some ambitious; *all* fallible; one, a penitent; one, a cast away. Yet the Gospel has lost neither its glory nor its joy. You will therefore receive the truths which your minister promulgates, affectionately *Those Truths* surely be of *God!* You will heed the authority under which he acts; *that* is from heaven: and as *he* "prayeth you in *Christ's stead*," you will, by God's grace, strive to profit under his ministry; and whatever be his infirmities, you will not only honour his office, but with respect to himself, for his Master's sake, you will love him still. 1 Thess. v. 12; also, 2 Cor. v. 20.

It might be useful here to point the attention of your children to a very interesting scene in our Saviour's early years, presented to us in the sacred narrative of St. Luke. The narrative evinces the

peace. The remaining commandments also are to be explained in their extended sense. "Thou shalt do no murder," saith the commandment. Therefore there is to be no brooding over offences. We are to "*hurt nobody, by word or deed;*" lest the hurtful deed or the hurtful word lead to further violence; and he, who like Hazael in the calm hour of peace and good will, would fire with righteous indignation at the surmise of proving a murderer, be tempted in the moment of mutual recrimination and rage, to perpetrate the very crime his soul abhorred [1]. This

existence of a strong ardour of learning in the youthful Jesus; a great desire to increase in wisdom as in stature. It appears, that when his parents, who had brought Him up with them from the country to Jerusalem, returned home to Nazareth with a great company of their friends, supposing Him to be with them, He lingered behind for some days, and at last was "found in the temple," an anxious inquirer, searching for the truth, sitting in the midst of the learned among his countrymen, alternately listening to their instructions and putting his own doubts and questions; evidencing thereby "a lowly ordering" of himself towards those, who at that time were the appointed "spiritual pastors and masters" in Israel. "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." (Luke ii. 46, 47.)

The fact here recorded is the more worthy of note from the exemplary filial obedience with which, unwillingly doubtless, but unhesitatingly, He withdrew, at the bidding of his mother, from this scene of instruction; and rather than again cause anxiety to his father and mother who had "sought Him sorrowing," forbore even the object He coveted; showing by his own example, that obedience is ever better than sacrifice, and that self-denial is the crowning virtue of a Christian character. Honouring his parents, He obeyed them; for he returned home and "became subject unto them."

[1] "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The Lord hath shewed me that thou *shalt be* king over Syria." (2 Kings viii. 13.) You, a mother, will strengthen this view of the

watchfulness over our words and actions will have a further good result. Being uninfluenced by bad passions, set free from the lusts of envy, hatred, and malice, we shall "*be true and just in all our dealings.*" Our minds steadily resolved in no way to harm others in thought, word, or deed, truth and candour will naturally stamp all we do and all we say. Where there is no envy, there is no deceit; where no hate, there is no dissembling with the lips; and where there is no malice, a lie finds no welcome and injustice no place. To what extent the commandment against adultery is to be carried, has been explained by our Divine Teacher Himself. With that decision which characterizes all his counsel, all his resolves, all his actions, He strikes at the root of the evil against which the commandment is directed, and shows how it is to be eradicated. He prevents the act by forbidding the desire, declaring that

subject, and make the instruction more impressive to your child, by referring him to the startling declaration of our blessed Lord, which bears expressly upon the point in question. Why is it that he denounces the "danger of hell-fire" to them who call their brother, "*Fool!*" The words "which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Matt. xv. 18, 19. It cannot be that the *word*—*fool*—even when spoken to the full extent of its contemptuous meaning, would be met with a condemnation from his lips, so deep and awful. The word of scorn, applied where kindred blood should cement kindred affection, indicates the bitter *thoughts* of the *heart*—*they* constitute the *sin*. If the subject be presented in this strong point of view, many a tender heart may be checked in its first ebullition of anger. The thought of these beginnings ending in hatred and malice, and the possibility of all the fearful ills to which, if not checked, they may lead, startle the gentle and generous feelings of the young. The tear of anger is changed into the tear of sorrow and affection. It is *not* in them *thus* to "bear hatred and malice in their heart."

"whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." He at once instructs us to understand the commandment as enjoining a due regulation of our affections, and a care to "*keep our bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity.*" The Eighth Commandment enjoins us to "*keep our hands from picking and stealing:*" forbidding as well the apparently minor failings in honesty, as the more flagrant and direct acts of dishonesty. God, who forbids the crime in its bold daring, forbids it equally in all those gradations of pilfering, overreaching, and cunning, whereby our neighbour can be injured by us in his property; *that* it is, which the law forbids. And it is clear that a thousand cases are continually occurring in the great business of life between men, in which there can be no other safeguard against fraud, no other security for honesty, than a conviction that we are acting under the eye of a present God, who "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity!" a God, from whom no secrets are hid; a God, who deigns so minutely to watch over our dealings with each other, that a man cannot cheat by a false balance, cannot overreach by an unfair measure, cannot withhold by a cunning device, cannot in any way lead another to be trapped by his arts, but that *all* is known to *Him*, before whom a false weight and a false balance are an abomination[1].

[1] You will not pass without special notice the care with which our God, as the supreme Governor of the world, has forbidden to his creatures every species of dishonesty in their several worldly dealings; each such offence being a sin against *Him*. This care is vouchsafed in mercy; for, as in the various and complicated interests which arise during the great struggle for superiority in worldly advantages, which naturally follows an advanced state of society, temptations to

Warned against the sin of stealing, we are also bound to its corresponding virtue. We are to "*be true and just in all our dealings.*" Truth is the parent of honour and courage. He who is conscious of no deceit, knows no fear; and whilst the thief and the purloiner, the unjust and the deceiver, perpetually dread detection and the shame which follows it; whilst their coward eye fancies every gaze which meets them is that of an accuser; "the righteous is bold as a lion." Wise then and happy they who, however poor and lowly their station be, pursue their way industriously and honestly! Honesty elevates the poorest man to the just respect of his fellow creatures, makes him at peace with his own heart, and, for Christ's sake, gains the favour of God. Under all enticements to dishonesty, under the gloomiest temptations of poverty and even indigence, he "keeps his hands from picking and stealing," and "is true and just in all his dealings." He shall not fail his reward even in this world, for "the Lord careth for the righteous;" whilst "the end of that man is peace;" and his children, whom he trains by example as by precept to walk in the right way, rejoice in him—"the generation of the upright shall be blessed." We next learn to "*keep our tongues from*

fraud and deceit accumulate; it is highly important that our minds should feel that an eye is over our *intentions* as well as our actions; and that fraud, in all its ramifications, though it may be directed only against our fellow creatures, is viewed by our Almighty Judge as a sin committed against *Himself*. "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. *But* thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God." (Deut. xxv. 13–16.)

evil speaking, lying, and slandering:" for by each of these kindred offences we "bear false witness." *Evil speaking* is not confined to the use of profane, or rude, or improper language; whatever conversation detracts from the credit of our neighbour, blazons his faults, exposes his infirmities, and lowers him in the estimation of others, is ranked by the Apostles under this offence. "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, speaketh evil of the law [1];" wherefore, let us "speak evil of no man [2]." *Lying* is also forbidden in the command to "bear no false witness." For whether false testimony be borne in public, or in private life, the guilt is the same, because it is known to God; and it is God who hath declared, "he that speaketh a lie shall not go unpunished." *Slandering* is likewise included in the sin of "bearing false witness [3]." The guilt of a slanderer is to be equalled only by its meanness. Boldly to tell a neighbour of his faults, and even to reprove him, would be the part of a brave and good man; but that suits not the base and timid soul of the slanderer. His be the coward course of basely insinuating charges, which report may magnify, and gradually shape into new form and figure, leaving others to perfect the work he has begun, and causing that the slander seem originated by any body rather than by him. He smiles within himself to see his success, rejoices to think that his surmises excited attention, led to various other evil suggestions from the idle and the envious, and brought about the result his low and grovelling heart exults in—the good fame of a neighbour ruined, and

[1] *James* iv. 11. [2] Titus iii. 4. [3] See page 191.

he himself, as he thinketh, unsuspected of the wrong. Vain thought! In injuring man, by thus "bearing false witness," he hath offended that omniscient God, whose voice is against him. "Put not thine hand with the wicked to raise a false report[1]," saith the Lord of heaven, for "whoso privily slandereth his neighbour him will I destroy[2]." In her explanation of the Tenth Commandment, the Church with great clearness shows us, what has been already observed, that we should consider all the divine commandments against particular sins, as urging upon us the adoption of their corresponding virtues[3]. The commandment itself lays down a principle which is the crowning strength and glory of this part of Christian morality, and strikes at the root of evil conduct, by prohibiting evil desires. Did no man covet, no man would be injured by fraud or deceit, by open or secret wrong. Who would do wrong to another, as a murderer, a thief, an adulterer, a false witness, unless first they coveted the possession of some object to be obtained only by the crime? Now the best mode of "*not coveting and desiring other men's goods*," is to be diligent and industrious in providing things needful for the respectability and comfort of our respective stations; under an abiding and consolatory conviction that our state is of God's ordering[4]. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Hence the Church bids her sons, "*learn and labour truly to get their own living:*" to strive in *truth*; in a spirit of

[1] Exod. xxiii. 1. [2] Psalm ci. 6. [3] See page 188.

[4] Refer to St. Paul's reasoning upon this subject, as stated in page 187.

integrity before God, and of honesty before men. The Christian will not merely scorn the unjust weight and the false balance, he will abhor equally deceit, or cunning, or evasion. In his striving amidst the world's conflicting interests, being open in intention as he is fair in act, he will spurn all those subterfuges and underhand designs, by pursuing which dishonesty "maketh haste to be rich." Or if it happen that a virtuous conduct fail its earthly recompense, he knows that for Jesus Christ's sake, a heavenly recompense awaits it; for "verily there *is* a reward for the righteous;" doubtless there is a God that "judgeth the earth." By convincing your children that God is thus the supreme moral Governor of the universe, you imbue them with a courage in thinking and acting which is no slight security against error. Suppose this conviction wanting, danger there is, that when right conduct has no apparent prosperous issue, there may lack courage to persevere in it; may lack faith in the future to justify the present; and the mind be at length driven, if not to a directly dishonourable course, at least to some course of mere present policy, in the vain expectation of finding safety in expediency —that last refuge of unchristian minds. How nobler far *his* course, who, in public or in private life, having learned from the oracles of divine wisdom that events are beyond man to calculate or control, boldly does "*that which is lawful and right;*" and, assured by faith that all things so done, in the spirit of the Gospel, will at the last prove to have been well done, fearlessly and uncompromisingly, unrepiningly and contentedly, does "*his duty in that state of life, unto which it may have pleased God to call him.*"

Such is the law of the Lord, when applied by the extended rule of holiness laid down in the Gospel of our Divine Teacher,—turning us from evil by dread of punishment, leading us to good by hope of reward; arming us against the fear of man by implanting the fear of God; supplying for heavenly conduct heavenly motives; softening the heart to all the sweet charities of life, and fortifying us against all the trying evils of it; fitting us for this world, whilst it prepares us for another.

But, however we may bow to a law thus emanating from Jehovah, the rich fountain of wisdom and mercy, justice and love; however we may feel its enactments to be worthy of the great Being who framed them, and salutary to those who are the objects of them; however we may receive them, in all the fulness given to them by our Lord in his Gospel, we must humble under a sense of our own comparative powerlessness to abide them, and adopt the lowly reflection of St. Paul, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The Church, anticipating this question, supplies an answer, in a tone of mingled authority and affection, which cannot but win upon the hearts of the young. Adopting the language of a tender and parental care to which your own mind as well as theirs will at once respond, she leads the "*good child*" to the grace of God, as the fountain whence he must draw strength for his weakness, and wisdom for his ignorance; that by the aid thence derived he may serve the Lord his God acceptably and hopefully. And well does she term such aid, "*special grace;*" *special*, not as being limited with respect to the individuals to whom it is vouchsafed, but as being of chief importance to the attainment of their object.

For as the Gospel itself—the "grace of God that bringeth salvation,"—"hath appeared unto *all* men[1]," so *all* men, who are in covenant with God through Christ, are privileged to ask for and seek the Holy Spirit, by whom the grace, specially necessary for holiness, is conveyed. They are *all* further encouraged to exercise their privilege by the promise, that if they ask they shall receive, if they seek they shall find.

[1] "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Titus ii. 11.

This is a favourable opportunity to instruct your child, both as to the different senses in which, from the very imperfection of language, the same word or term must at different times be used, and as to the right mode of discriminating the proper sense of it.

St. Paul uses the term, "the grace of God," in three senses. In the above address to Titus he uses it to express the Gospel generally; as is shown by the consecutive verses, in which he declares its object, its power, its requisitions, and its blessings, to be those of the Gospel itself. Whereas to the Romans the same Apostle defines the grace of God to be an extension of that divine mercy, whereby the righteousness of the righteous, however in itself unworthy, is accepted through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, imputed to them; for "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom. v. 20. Whilst in stating to the Corinthians the result of his own experience in struggling against the infirmities of a fallen nature, he applies the same term to that divine help by which he successfully strove against them, according to God's word. "My grace is sufficient for you." 2 Cor. xii. 9. And in this last sense is used the term "*special* grace" by the Church on this occasion; directing your child to its influence, as supplying the will and the power, whereby he may be enabled to do the commandments of his God.

It is clear that in each of these instances right reason bids us understand the same word in different senses; and the discrimination, as to the sense in which it is to be taken in each several case, is rendered easy by considering the context, marking well the particular scope and bearing of the passages connected with the word. This may be a useful rule to apply generally in understanding and *explaining* to your child Scripture-terms.

That it is thus special, from its necessity, is evident to every thinking mind. We cannot but feel, that without higher and holier power than our own hearts possess, the best endeavours after a godly life were indeed vain. It is required that we "search the Scriptures;" it is required that "we worship Him," whom these Scriptures reveal to us; it is required also that "we strive against evil," and "follow after that which is good," in our conduct towards both God and man; and in self-denial, to bear our cross meekly: the world too must be subdued in our hearts; nay, we must conquer ourselves. But how are we to comply with these requisitions? In vain shall we search the Scriptures, unless the Spirit of holiness prepare our minds to receive and hold fast the blessed hope we find there. Vain will be our worship, unless the same Holy Spirit be at hand to sanctify our service, and make, that the meditations of our hearts, and the words of our mouth, be acceptable in thy sight, "O Lord, our strength, and our Redeemer." And if the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil are to be resisted successfully; if we are to keep the path of holiness, rectitude, and honour, swerving neither to the right hand nor to the left; if we are to persevere in our course, neither lured by the winning smiles of prosperity, nor deterred by the stern terrors of adversity, our help cannot be in ourselves: it must be in God. His power must be our defence and our shield; his wisdom our counsel and our guide: and *that*, by his *special* grace—special therefore, not as extraordinary, but as *indispensable*.

For this gracious aid we must pray. Here you will again pointedly instruct your child in the necessity of prayer. His young mind, strongly impressed with the

truth, that God, omnipotent and omniscient and the searcher of hearts, knoweth our necessities even before we ask, may wonder why man should pour forth the expression of his wants, and lay open in words, all those fears and hopes, those wishes and those designs, which must be already known to such a Being. The work would seem needless. Yet now, as aforetime, however full of blessing be the promises of our heavenly Father, He demands that we avow our dependence upon Him by giving expression to our wants; "I will yet for this be *enquired of* by the house of Israel, to do it for them [1]." There is no promise of the aid required unless it be asked; *then* we shall receive. There is no prospect held out of gaining the comfort we need unless we seek it; *then* we shall find it. Thus your child will learn the necessity of prayer, not merely as an occasional act, but an habitual duty; "*at all times to call for God's special grace by diligent prayer.*" This is the truly apostolical view of the duty of prayer, and is to be understood with the same limitations as the strong and startling exhortation of St. Paul, "*Pray without ceasing* [2]:" never cease the habit of prayer, but be ready for a fulfilment of the duty whenever occasion shall present itself; not only on the more solemn occasions of appointed public service, or in the holy hour of family worship, or in the calm seasons of private devotion; but also whenever either troubles compass you about, from which there is no help but from God; or doubts perplex, which no wisdom can resolve but that supplied from on high; or haply, when some unlooked for blessing is vouchsafed, for which the over-full heart

[1] Ezek. xxxvi. 37. [2] 1 Thess. v. 17.

longs to pour forth its strains of thankfulness and joy. The advantages of this habit, who can tell? In the lowest depths of misery, there is no despair, for we have a God at once to flee to; our shield, our refuge, our defence. In the bright hour of joy, presumption is checked; for God requires that to *Him* we give all the praise and all the glory.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Our Father . . . . . from evil. Amen."

And now it is, that the Church, with a consistency which so eminently characterizes her as the Church of Christ, lays in the youthful heart the foundation of a habit of prayer, by requiring that her children learn that short and comprehensive form, which He, by whose name they are called, and by whose Spirit they are sanctified, did Himself frame and teach his disciples; a prayer so comprehensive, that in it all our wants and all our wishes are remembered; all our fears and all our hopes set forth; yet so concise, that the mind of a child can retain the words, almost ere the tongue can lisp them, and will cherish them whilst memory lasts; through years of trial, and sorrow, and sickness, till death itself. The prayer is indeed a ready manual of devout aspiration; adapted to every emergency, and ever, as we fondly trust, acceptable before the throne of grace, for *his* sake who taught it[1].

"OUR FATHER."

The endearing title by which our Divine Teacher Himself encourages us to address the all-present God, in whom we live and move *and have our being*, opens

[1] *Refer to the Note* upon this subject, in page 108.

at once an easy mode by which you may explain to your children the nature of their duty to God, and the spirit in which it ought to be fulfilled. You have but to remind them of the love they bear to their earthly parents, and they will at once feel what is the love they owe to their heavenly Father. All the endearing ties which bind them to *you*, bind them to HIM; though under a still more enduring obligation: for though tender affection, and uniform honour be the bounden duty of children to parents; yet as children grow up to manhood, they gradually cease that dependence upon parents for protection, and guidance, and counsel, which they sought in childhood [1]. Towards our heavenly Father, the case is different. Not only to the end of our existence are we to love and honour Him, not only are our best affections to be fixed upon Him, but to the latest moment of life's consciousness we are to look to Him for counsel, for direction, for companionship [2]. Our dependence upon Him never ceases. Nay, your own experience probably will testify, that dependence upon a heavenly Father for counsel, and protection, and guidance, is more and more needed as you advance in life; whatever be your station, whatever your condition: from the highest to the lowest. Few there be, few indeed there ever can be, who do not find that as years accumulate, sorrows and perplexities accumulate; and stamp man as dependent for guidance and protection on Him who alone can supply either. To whom look the forsaken and the mourner, the orphan and the widow?

[1] See p. 176.

[2] When we "walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we *shall* fear no evil. His rod and his staff will comfort us." We shall *still*, O blessed hope! we shall still "walk with God."

On whom do they depend? but upon Jehovah, the Father of the fatherless, the God of the widow, even God in his holy habitation. Indeed, among those thousand cares to which all are liable, and under the weight of which the world can give no relief, there is only one sure friend to flee to; one only who can effectually either remove the burden, or strengthen us to bear it—*that* friend, "our Father in heaven." By opening the mind of your child to the new relation in which he now stands to the great Supreme, as "a child of God," you not only soften his heart to a warm and unreserved love of his heavenly Father, but you also impress him deeply with a proportionate value of his baptismal covenant, whereby this new relation to his Creator is vouchsafed to him. He is a child of God, and privileged to cry, "Abba, Father!" because he is a member of Christ. Through the mediation of that blessed Redeemer alone it is, that he looks for mercy, and trusts to be sustained by the power, and comforted by the love of "his *Father in heaven*."

What measure then should there be to our filial reverence, and our filial love? Dwelleth our Father in heaven?—"*Hallowed be his name.*" Mingle we the deepest reverence with the holiest love! As we "walk with Him our God and our Father, let no careless irreverent mention of the holy name, by which He is called, pass our lips! no taking of that name in vain! Let us rather glory to honour it by a holy worship, "in spirit and in truth." But if to reverence Him in our hearts be a delight, how is that delight expanded when with our assembled fellow creatures we honour Him publickly in the congregation; with one accord making common supplication before Him, offering

united thanks, pouring forth united adoration, acknowledging Him to be the gracious heavenly Father of us all, and in the fulness of honour, love, and gratitude, with one voice as with one heart, "hallowing his holy Name!"

We next pray that his "*kingdom may come.*" With hearts devoted to the honour of our Father in heaven, and longing that every soul hallow his name, and reverence his authority in love, we pray that the laws of his spiritual kingdom upon earth may be established in the hearts of men, especially in our own; that the nations may do him service; and that the kingdoms of the world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. Further, we pray that at the last we may all be admitted to the joys of his everlasting kingdom in heaven; a kingdom, of which, in our baptism, we were all made inheritors, and of which, those who eventually shall not be partakers, will fail their inheritance by failure in the suit and service required of them—that devoted service, which, valueless though it be in his sight to whom we offer it, can never be dispensed with [1].

[1] You will find the minds of your children very inquisitive. Children like to know the reason of things; and the Holy Scriptures meet this curiosity by the peculiar style in which they convey much of their instruction. In the discourses of our blessed Lord the most solemn truths and the sublimest doctrines are frequently conveyed in the form of parables; in a comparison of earthly with heavenly things. You will often therefore find it necessary to explain religious truths by a reference to the common affairs of life. If, for instance, when you impress upon the young, their obligation to serve God by a holy course of life, they inquire why is service required, when, after all, they can be but "unprofitable servants;" their service at best valueless; you will show them by the common dealings of men, how it is a recognised principle, that a duty may be highly important, and even

But the blessings of this kingdom, either of grace or of glory, are promised upon certain conditions, and heaven, like other the intermediate blessings which are God's gifts, is to be gained only by a fulfilment of those conditions. The words of Christ are clear and express. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven." Hence the importance of earnestness and sincerity in offering the following petition, –"*Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*" Even reason teaches us, that obedience to a superior is the only sure test of reverence and service. Your child's own affectionate heart can understand, for it can feel, that to do your will is the proper proof of his love and honour. His conscience—how would it reprove him, if when he knew what your will was, he should either

absolutely necessary, yet shall it have neither value nor merit. Thus where any special favour is publicly granted by a nation or a sovereign to some individual who has conferred great benefit upon his country, the grant is often accompanied with a condition indicative of dependence and service. Some token is at stated periods required, which however of no intrinsic value, yet avails to ensure continuance of the advantage, because it is a proof that the conditions are fulfilled. So our heavenly Father gives us right and title to a heavenly inheritance, but He expects our service; and however worthless that service be, it cannot be withheld but with forfeiture of blessing. The offering is sanctified by another, even by Him, through whom we offer it, Jesus Christ the righteous.

It will not, I trust, be deemed too familiar an illustration of this principle, if you explain to your child, that when the hero of his age, crowned with honour and rewarded by the well-earned domains which a grateful country has decreed him, offers, year by year, to his sovereign, the flag of fealty, in token that he acknowledges service to the source whence his grants of honour flow, the offering is in itself valueless: but the motive is duty, and the benefit is possession.

oppose it or neglect to do it! He would never be easy in his mind till he had amended his neglect, or removed his opposition. He would consider that you, from your experience, knew better than he did what was right or wrong for him to do; and that he might well trust your parental love, strong as unchanging, to urge nothing but what tended to his good, and furthered his best interests in time and in eternity. I can well picture him to myself, at first perhaps not prompt to obey some parental command, which may seem to oppose his own wishes: his little heart fills with a secret resolve to escape obedience; and because he cannot see, as you see, the reasonableness and the necessity of the command, his mind is set to do his own will and resist yours; till some endearing expression intervene, some fond token of parental love which touches his better feelings; then, young though he is, he conquers himself, when you remind him that in praying daily for grace to "do *God's* will," he virtually prays to do *yours*; for the will of a parent is to a child as the will of God. So is the filial obligation of all men towards God, the heavenly Father of all. Nay! the obligation is of a still higher stamp, of still holier power; even as heaven is higher than earth. We pray that our obedience may be of a spiritual and heavenly character; that we may do God's will on earth, even as angels do it "*in heaven*." Remind your child that this implies a desire to do God's will *at all times*; not only when it may suit with our own convenience, be agreeable to our own vain wishes, and harmonize with our own views; but on occasions when perhaps His will is to be done only by the entire sacrifice of our own; when the proof of submission must be patience under

suffering, meekness under oppression, endurance under wrong; when some favourite wish must be given up, some long cherished resolve broken, some plan for securing ease, or wealth, or praise be at once laid aside. Yet does such obedience bring its own reward even here. Is ever our obedience unreserved and full, as that of the angels? Sharing the employment of angels, we share their peace and their joy. Your child here also better understands this part of his duty to God, by bearing in mind his duty to you. He knows that as often as he is wise enough to sacrifice his own wishes to yours, he enjoys an inward feeling of satisfaction which more than overbalances any disappointment he may have experienced from his obedience. So is it with us all when we yield our own minds to the guidance of our God. There is indeed then that deep and heartfelt joy, "with which the stranger" to self-denial and self-control "intermeddleth not;" we then feel, "that the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him;" and though how glorious be the angels' joy, what its purity and extent and fulness, we can never know till mortal shall have put on immortality; yet St. Paul tells us that the faithful *may*, even here, "have their conversation in heaven;" and surely if there ever be on earth a foretaste of heaven, it is when by grace we have conquered our own will, and done the will of God even as angels; freely and unreservedly, fully and joyfully.

Yet in our weakness and infirmity how are we to do the work of angels? The blessed hope of any such approximation to those glorious intelligences as shall render our work like theirs, perfect, is reserved, till, purified by trial as gold by fire, our souls shall be

freed and our bodies glorified, sin conquered and earth have passed away. But that we can attain the *spirit* though *not* the *extent* of their obedience is clearly implied by the very words we are thus taught to offer. Therefore the next petition is an address to our heavenly Father for such sustentation to the whole man, soul and body, as may fit us to do his will. "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" The petition thus viewed opens to you a wide field for instructing your children on a point, too often altogether lost sight of—that man has a spiritual as well as a bodily life, and that for the one as well as for the other is required and supplied, appropriate support, in order that the powers of each may have strength for their due exercise. As the body is strengthened for labour by the food convenient for it, enabling us to do our duty in that state of life to which it may have pleased God to call us, so the soul is strengthened by the word and spirit of grace; "thoroughly furnished unto all good works," and having so abundantly "its fruit unto holiness," that at the great harvest of the world it may, with the righteous—the good fruit from the good seed—be approved of the householder, separated from the worthless chaff, and at last gathered into the garner. You will therefore teach your children first their dependence upon the good and gracious providence of God for their daily food; explaining to them that though their parents labour diligently for them, the success of that labour depends upon the goodness of God[1]. You will then

[1] The most laudable diligence, the most consummate skill, the most anxious care—all come to no prosperous issue without Him; for, suppose the fields to be diligently cultivated, the land duly *ploughed*, and sown, and harrowed, and weeded—it is true that gene-

teach them, that spiritually also they "live and move and have their being" in *Him*. The soul lives by *Him*. True! we cultivate our hearts; we break up, so to speak, the stony ground; we sow therein the good seed; as weeds spring up together with the corn, them we pluck out. Yet, this labour, and diligence, and care, what would it all profit unless the Sun of righteousness gave life to the seed, and the dew of the Spirit fostered it'? Wherefore, praying for "*daily bread*" we pray for

rally such cultivation is succeeded by good crops of corn, and the corn gives food for us from year to year; but this is because the great Creator has given his blessing; his sun and his showers; the rain to swell with life the seed sown, and the genial warmth in due season to ripen it. If He were to withdraw these blessings; if the waters should over abound, or be deficient, if the sun should deny its beams, or parch with excess of heat; if ungenial frosts nip the bud in its tenderness, or the insect tribes ravage the fair promise of full increase; *then* what avails all man's labour? Where then is recompense to the diligent, success to the skilful, reward to the careful?—Since thus to God our heavenly Father we owe the bread we daily eat, to Him let us humbly pray for continued supply of it day by day; and so confess, gratefully, that as our heavenly Father careth for us with exceeding love, so we rejoice to own our dependence upon Him, and to receive at *his* hands the food convenient for us.

' Amid the various instructive considerations which suggest themselves to the mind, when reflecting upon the analogy between the life of the soul and the life of the body, one there is, which, though replete with encouragement, is too often lost sight of. The humble Christian sometimes finds, that notwithstanding all his toil and diligence and care in sowing the good seed, tares grow up with it; evil thoughts spring up amid good resolutions. Is he therefore to be disheartened in his work, and to despair? I trow not. Let him look to the autumn fields around him. His eye sees only man's labour blest of heaven, and the grain ripe for harvest; yet the husbandman himself knows that to the last, the weeds spring up, and that he, who early toiled to plough and to sow, now toils to weed and to clear. So with the soul. We are not to be dismayed or discouraged when we find

spiritual as well as temporal food, in proof of our *daily* dependence both upon the *providence* and the *grace* of our heavenly Father. To *Him*, finally, we look for a supply of all things which He thinks necessary for us; "as well for the *body* as the *soul*."

But, alas for human infirmity! however strengthened by the bread of life—the word and Spirit of Christ—still the soul, even if kept from presumptuous and wilful sin, cannot serve the Lord with that pure and perfect worship which it would fain offer. Sins of omission and imperfection, negligences and ignorances, will mark the course of the best of the sons of Adam; and in the sight of God "no man living shall be justified." We therefore are all taught daily to implore pardon for others as well as for ourselves. "*Forgive us our trespasses.*" How necessary it is even for our present peace that we gain the pardon for which we pray, your children are easily taught by being reminded of the misery they themselves endure when they are conscious of having offended their parents. What heavy-heartedness; what bitter tears, though shed perhaps in secret; what unceasing restlessness; what severe self-reproach; till they have expressed their sorrow and contrition, have received assurance of forgiveness, and are received again into wonted love and favour! So is it with us also as the children of

infirmities still clinging to the heart, even though habitual labour have been exercised thereon. We are rather urged the more to perseverance. As with the ground, so with the heart; as to bodily life, so to spiritual life; to those who would be gathered like wheat unto the garner, there can be no sure rest from labour till life be passed; till death be swallowed up in victory; and we gain that final undisturbed "rest, which remaineth for the people of God."

God. When, under a consciousness of sin, we feel ourselves separated from Him—for "darkness hath no fellowship with light," the sinner no communion with God,—what accumulated misery falls upon us! even worldly troubles press with added weight; worldly joys pall upon us; our activity is gone; all elasticity of mind is broken, and the very spring of life seems to fail. We know not rest, till we know forgiveness. Mark now the united wisdom and lovingkindness of our Divine Teacher, in the striking condition He has laid down, as the ground whereon we may hope to offer this petition successfully. It is indeed wisely framed to meet the importance of the boon for which we pray. To be ourselves forgiven of God, we must first forgive others. Touched with the feeling of our infirmities, our Lord knew how hard it is for man to forgive a wrong. He therefore supplies adequate motive for so arduous a duty; for who can be at rest, *unforgiven* of God? "Forgive us our trespasses, *as we forgive them that trespass against us.*" Teach your child early this view of the petition in question. Show him that when brothers or sisters, or other youthful companions give offence, he is to check the first risings of anger, lest though others may be wrong in offending him, he offend God by avenging the wrong; and when he is about to offer the petition for pardon, feel to his dismay that he offers it in vain, so long as he fulfils not its conditions, which are, that he first pardon others. You will thus gradually discipline his young mind to a most valuable habit of self-command upon christian principle; and you may humbly hope that he, who as a child offers not this petition till he has first checked and conquered his anger against young companions who

offend him, will in after life, aided by divine grace in answer to prayer, be prompt to pardon all who injure him, even as he would be himself pardoned; and whilst those of a worldly spirit think how sweet it is to revenge, he will feel how much sweeter it is to forgive. Forgiveness! O where is aught more noble? aught more blessed? aught more heavenly?

The next petition, by reminding us of our own constant liability to trespass against God, our neighbour, or ourselves, leads us still more readily to extend forgiveness towards those who trespass against us. "*Lead us not into temptation.*" Why should we fear being led into temptation, but that we distrust our strength to conquer? Who fears the rush of battle? not the strong man confident in his armour of proof, but the weak and unarmed. And are not we, by nature, without strength and defenceless? No wonder we shrink from temptation, and dread to meet those "principalities and powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world," against which we are to fight. Thus a sense of our own acknowledged weakness induces us to bear with the infirmities of our fellow creatures. In a state of probation, however, it is impossible altogether to avoid temptations, or *trials;* for how are we to be proved except by trial, even "as gold in the fire?" Faith therefore comes in aid to strengthen our weakness, and revive our courage, and give us powers not our own. We trust that if we be not spared the trial, we shall be spared defeat under it; and that *He* will deliver us, whose power and mercy are alike infinite; who will not leave us alone to contend against it, but will perfect his strength in our weakness; and at last, when perhaps we be weary almost unto death in

resisting; our hearts weighed down with heaviness, and our spirits sunk in hopelessness; he will stretch forth his right hand to save and defend us; and though he hath led us into temptation, will also "*deliver us from the evil of it.*" Here you will do well to impress upon the mind of your child the inestimable value of his baptismal privilege, which permits him to ask for, with a hope of gaining, a power which can and will deliver him from all evil, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree; from the evil of sin, and the evil consequences which spring from it; from evils, temporal and spiritual; from blindness of understanding, from hardness of heart, from love of the world, from alienation from God, and finally from the loss of heaven and the pains of hell in that other and future world, to which every passing hour, whether of vice or of virtue, of sin or of holiness, is hastening him. What rich store of comfort! The Being who is able, and willing, and desirous thus to deliver us, is "our Father in heaven!"

[1] The child should understand, that in the common sense of the word "*temptation*," God never leads us into it. It is not our heavenly Father who leads us to hatred on the one hand, to inordinate affection on the other, it is not He who whispers to the injured that anger is noble and revenge sweet; it is not He who holds up the pleasures of the world as our highest joy, and its sorrows as our deep misery. St. James (i. 14,) states at once the truth fully and broadly. "God tempteth not any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed." God is said to lead us into temptation, as our blessed Saviour was led into temptation in the wilderness, for the purpose of trying our faith, whether it be firm when assailed; true when allured; patient when oppressed. How, except by such trial, can man, in a life of probation, give evidence of a regenerate state! how show himself above the world! how shine as a child of God walking in the light, save by contrast with the children of the devil, who walk in darkness! Gold is known by enduring the fire; the faithful, by "enduring temptation." It is

Suppose the wicked to despise the riches of God's goodness, and slight the name of Father; suppose them neither to hallow his name, nor reverence his authority, nor obey his will, nor recognize in his providence and grace the means of life for soul and body; suppose that, neither fearing the sin of trespassing against Him, nor conscious of the horrible danger of their sin, they scorn to ask of God forgiveness for themselves; and as to their fellow creatures who trespass against them, grant no forgiveness, and exercise no charity; suppose them rushing into temptation and their hearts only evil continually—the faithful yet rejoice to know, that thy name, O God, is not less holy; thy kingdom not less founded in mercy, power, and love; thy will not less surely accomplished; thy bounty not less ready to supply all things which be necessary as well for the body as the soul; thy compassion not less graciously extended to those who call upon Thee faithfully, forgiving all their sins and healing all their infirmities; thy power not less prompt either to lead us from temptation, or to deliver us from the evil of it—for "*thine* IS *the kingdom.*" True, the wicked may be rebellious and rise up against thy laws, yet shall thy kingdom be established in strength and justice as in

indeed natural that under a humbling sense of our infirmities, we should shrink from such trials of the soul. Yet remind your children, that prayer will bring down strength for their weakness, courage for their fear, hope for their despair, and gain at last the victory through Him, the great Captain of their salvation, who fought the fight before them, and now by his word and Spirit fighteth it for them and with them, and whose blessing is sure for ever. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them who love him." James i. 12.

love and mercy; and, at last, rule over all. "*Thine* is *the power*." Thou art long suffering indeed and full of compassion, and willing not the death of a sinner, givest added time often for repentance, forbearing to strike that the offender may repent. Still all power is thine—power to spare, power to punish; and if Thou seemest to withhold thy power here, it is only another proof that just recompense will be hereafter; the power itself the same; yesterday, to-day, and for ever. "*Thine* likewise is *the glory*;" glory ever unclouded, though the darkness of sin strive to interpose between Thee and thy faithful ones. The licentious may trample on the pure laws of thy kingdom of grace, scorning thy authority and oppressing thy people with a "Tush, how shall God see!" They may pretend disregard of the joys of that heavenly kingdom where honour is reserved for the righteous. The infidel may look to thy word, despising alike its threats and its promises, throwing back thy mercy, and defying thy power; whilst the worldly may prefer to walk by the glimmering of the sparks they themselves have kindled, and veil their eyes to the clear and full light which coming down from heaven in the person of thy blessed Son, ever shineth in his gospel; they may refuse its guidance, mock its consolations, and despise its glory. Yet shall thy kingdom rule over all; thy power be manifest through earth as well as in heaven; and whilst prophets and apostles, saints and martyrs, the Church on earth, and the Church in heaven, do acknowledge Thee in thy glorious Godhead; the Father of an infinite majesty, the everlasting Son, the all-glorious Comforter, the everlasting Father; Thou shalt reign, the King of glory, "for ever and ever! Amen!"

The several objects to which our minds are directed in this prayer, and the grounds on which we rest our hope of an answer to it in peace, are all concisely and admirably summed up in the Catechism. Why are we bold to pray for God's *grace* that *we* and *all people* may hallow his holy name by a holy *worship?* may serve him acceptably as the King of grace and of glory! may *obey* Him *as we ought to do;* doing his will on earth as angels do it in heaven?—He is *our Father, the Giver of all goodness*, who will not refuse his Holy Spirit to them who ask it of Him; our wisdom and our help, our sanctification and our strength. Thus, addressing a Father, who can doubt his care over his children? Shall He not freely send "*us all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies*," giving us our daily bread—bread of earth, supplied by his providence; bread of heaven, supplied by his grace! Again, what parents are not ready to forgive an offending child when offence is followed by sorrow, and the heart is bent humbly to pray pardon? How much more ready is our heavenly Father to "*be merciful unto us and forgive us our sins?*" Be it our care first to forgive those who trespass against us, lest we ourselves render vain the very prayer we utter, for we are the parties who prescribe the conditions—"*as* we forgive" others. And when we pray Him "to lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," we look to Him alone "*to save us and defend us in all dangers ghostly and bodily.*" Himself a Spirit, He will fight for us against the spirits of evil, "*will keep us from all sin and wickedness*, from *our ghostly* or spiritual "*enemy*," the devil; and finally claiming us as his own in Christ Jesus, "*keep us from everlast-*

ing death." This is the crowning mercy. *All* his mercies however are of grace. One only Being could claim them for us, and *that* Being, "*our Lord Jesus Christ.*" He claims his Father's love for us on the plea of "*mercy and goodness.*" The mercy of God is infinite; his "goodness endureth yet *daily.*" *Therefore* it is that we ask *daily* pardon and *daily* grace; in faith, nothing doubting. *Therefore, we say Amen, so be it.*

CHAPTER XXV.

THE latter part of the Catechism completes the instruction more immediately necessary for the young children, and explains, with equal brevity and clearness, the nature of those blessed sacraments, by the one of which we are *admitted* into the Church of Christ; by the other, are *continued* therein.

There are many holy rites and ordinances in the Church, but only "two sacraments generally necessary to salvation; Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord." These are holy rites with peculiar and significant characteristics. First, they are outward and visible signs, which we discern; and they represent an inward and spiritual grace, which we discern not, but which we believe. Secondly, they have been ordained by Christ Himself, in a manner and form, marked and specific, and distinguished from all other ordinances[1]. Baptism is the entrance into spiritual life, so ordained by Christ

[1] The Supper of the Lord was "ordained by Christ Himself." The occasion upon which He ordained it is stated by the Evangelists, and also by St. Paul, with a simplicity and beauty, powerfully calculated

Himself; the Holy Communion sustains that life, and was also ordained by Christ Himself. No one therefore can reasonably expect to receive in their fulness the blessings of the Gospel who does not prepare himself for the reception of them in the way which Christ marks out; and his word is decisive upon this point. "Go ye; teach *all* nations, baptizing them" —and—"Drink ye *all* of this" cup. Your children will easily understand that to profess ourselves desirous to find the way which leadeth to heaven, and choose our own course, when Jesus Christ has directed us to take his, would be as absurd as if they should themselves

to interest and affect the mind of a youthful reader. Nor, as you direct your children to the passages which contain the narrative, will you fail to point out the gracious appeal made by the blessed Saviour to man's gratitude, as a superadded motive for keeping the ordinance holy for ever. "Do this," was his command. Do this "in remembrance of me;" was the tender motive supplied—of *me*, who am about to die for you; of *me*, your loving friend, about to give his own life to save yours; of *me*, your good and faithful Shepherd, about to lay down his life for the sheep. What mercy! what love! He who might have left the command in all the fearful power of its authority, and attended only by the terrors of its penalties if disobeyed, deigned to plead as a benefactor that gratitude. Slight return for such a boon!

Baptism was also "ordained by Christ Himself." As you direct your child to the Scripture where this event is narrated, you will point out the force which it derives from the time and circumstances by which it is accompanied. It was the Redeemer's last and memorable charge to his Church, ere, ascending up where He was before, He resumed the glory He had before the world began. Thus He did ordain this Sacrament under circumstances of special solemnity, investing it with a heavenly character; for with Him this world of trial was passed, and the world of glory was begun. Then it was that He ordained Baptism, "wherein by an outward and visible sign," should be represented "an inward and spiritual grace"—the means and the pledge.

pretend to love and honour you, follow your guidance, go whithersoever you direct, and do whatsoever you command; and yet, when they leave your presence and your eye is not on them, take a contrary path and neglect or oppose your will. What Christ hath thus ordained must therefore be generally necessary for salvation, to as many as would be saved by Him. Furthermore, these sacraments are ".the means of grace, and a pledge to assure us thereof." It may seem wonderful and even strange to young minds, that God should ordain an outward means of attaining spiritual benefit. But wonder ceases when they consider that so of old has ever been the way of God with man[1]. Thus in the awful night when the first-born of the Egyptians perished throughout the land and the first-born of Israel were saved, he could have saved by a word, or simply by his will; but he chose that there should be an outward sign of the grace bestowed; and the record of their preservation is in proof, for ever, that the means used were *indeed* "means of grace, and a pledge to assure them thereof[2]." Hence we now thankfully receive the means and pledge of grace supplied in *our passover*, the holy *sacrament* of the body and blood of the Lamb of God, the true paschal Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world, to redeem from the angel of death, not the first-born of Israel only, but all; of every nation and of every age. Thus again, for long years, circumcision was the outward and visible sign by which the elect people of God entered into covenant with Him. Here too was not only the striking fact of an outward sign, in token of

[1] See page 50.

[2] Exod. xii. 23.

an inward grace and as a means of gaining it, but the parties most deeply interested, being infants, neither were nor could be consenting parties to the sacrament [1]. God, however, commanded, that what they could not do for themselves, others should do for them: He spake, and the people obeyed; and so long as the people obeyed, it was well with them: He, their God; they, his people. What to God's elect people circumcision was in old times, baptism is to us now. True, the unconscious infant knoweth not the blessing vouchsafed to him when he enters into covenant with God; but Christian parents, like Jewish parents, gladly accept for him admittance therein; in an humble, but unshrinking faith, that what God commands with promise, must, if obeyed, end in blessing. Nor could there be imagined a more significant sign of baptismal grace than water, wherein the person is baptized — the cleansing effect of that element being eminently significant of the purity of heart, the change from "filthiness of the flesh and spirit," to the purity which is the effect of spiritual regeneration. In that covenant, behold! old things are put away; all things become new! by nature children of wrath, we are made children of grace; followers of the world, we become members of Christ; once the slaves of Mammon we become servants and children of God; whilst, to crown all, mortal man becomes an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven [2]. As water cleanses the body, so the Spirit of grace cleanses the soul [3]. The conditions, however, here required from those who come to

[1] See the Reflections upon the Holy Communion.

[2] Refer to page 216 on this subject.

[3] See page 58.

baptism—"*repentance and faith*—" are such as infants "cannot perform." How can infants repent of that of which they are ignorant, or exercise faith in a state of unconsciousness? The Church, therefore, accepts the promises made by others on their part. Hence the sponsors promise that, when the mind of the young person opens to understand the truth, he will do *both*: that is, he will *repent* and *believe*: "repent him truly of his unworthiness, and stedfastly believe the promises of God made to him in that sacrament." Be it your earnest care then to lead him on, step by step, as his advancing age and opening understanding shall guide you, to feel his own responsibility for taking upon himself these two requisitions, repentance and faith; that so he may enjoy the privileges of the covenant, to the requisitions of which he is pledged [1].

The doctrine laid down in our Catechism concerning the second sacrament is in strict conformity with the word of Him who ordained it—"This do in *remembrance* of me," was the command of Christ. The Church adopts the spirit of the command, and explains it. She teaches, that it was ordained "for the *continual remembrance* of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby:" not for a repetition of the sacrifice, but a commemoration of it from time to time; whereby, as St. Paul clearly and forcibly assures us, "we do show the Lord's death till he come." This sacrifice was offered "once for all;" being thereby eminently distinguished from the Jewish sacrifices, which, being types only of Him the great sacrifice, were "offered continually." The very

[1] See the Service for Confirmation.

terms in which our Lord clothed his command, show that no fresh sacrifice is offered, but the former commemorated, —"Do this in *remembrance* of me." Memory carries us back to what is past, and cannot be engaged in what is present[1]. The sacrifice of the death of Christ is represented by the bread and wine, as "its outward and visible sign;" and this according to his own ordering. And what outward sign could better represent the thing signified? Again, the body and blood of Christ are said to be "*verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper.*" Nothing is more strictly true. Mark how closely the terms are guarded, and how accurately the distinction is marked. It is not by simply eating bread and drinking wine that "the body and blood of Christ can be verily and indeed taken," for then it would cease to be, what it is, an act of faith; and the distinction between the faithful and the faithless had been unnecessary. The *faithful* alone partake thereof in *verity:* for the partaking thereof is a *spiritual* partaking; and a spiritual act is an act of faith; and faith fixes the soul on things *not seen*, even upon the efficacy and benefits of the sacrifice of the body and blood, represented by the bread and wine. That efficacy and these benefits form the verity with which the humble and the faithful partake of this holy sacrament. The benefits are stated in all their fulness to be "*the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine.*" The very elements by which these blessings to the soul are shadowed will much aid you in explaining to your child, when in

[1] *This* will be considered more fully in the Communion Service.

after years you prepare him to accompany you to that precious feast, its nature and necessity, its obligation and its privileges[1]. For instance, if, as will be natural to an inquiring mind, he ask the reasons which bind him to "partake of those holy mysteries," and allege that though he feels its obligation, being of Christ's command, he yet cannot see *how* such an act of faith is to benefit his soul—direct his attention at once to the bread and wine, the appointed outward sign of the promised spiritual grace. Suppose him to forbear his daily food, because it is above his comprehension or the comprehension of any man, to understand *how* that food, of which bread is the staff, is converted into the substance of his body, and becomes flesh and blood, and continually renews the frame in all its intricate and wondrous variety of parts, what would be the consequence? he would starve and die. Men partake of food, supplied to them, not because they understand its operation in sustaining their bodies, but because they find it the appointed mode of God's providence for the support of life. And since when weakness, and weariness, and sickness oppress us, we find wine to renew the fainting strength, refresh our weary frame, and rally our failing powers, we do not hesitate to partake thereof, though its mode of operation is confessedly a mystery, baffling our reason, how well are we here taught to receive gratefully and humbly the means of sustaining the life of the soul, appointed thereto by the God of grace, even though here also the mode of operation be a mystery passing man's understanding. God appoints and commands:

[1] See the subsequent reflections upon this subject, in the Communion Service.

obedience must be right. If we partake not, why marvel at weakness of purpose? why complain that we lack strength to resist temptation? why grieve that we have sorrow of heart and vexation of spirit, and fainting powers of spiritual life? Is it wonderful that our very life faileth when we forbear the food appointed to support it? Where is the marvel that we have no strength to resist our spiritual enemies, no desire or power to exercise ourselves in the Christian virtues, no spirit to rejoice in our heavenly hopes, when the soul partaketh not of the bread of life and the water of life? The wonder would be, were it otherwise. It is indeed to the too general neglect of the holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, that we must trace much of that worldliness, that lukewarmness, that gloom and despondency which so often mark the character even of professing Christians. They profess, but obey not; "they say, and do not;" they call Christ Lord, yet obey Him not; they claim to be of those who love Him, yet heed not his last, his most solemn, his most affecting command —"Do *this* in *remembrance* of me."

For the neglect of a duty, thus evidently not less imperative than beneficial, we must look to the natural evil of the human heart, which, until regulated by an habitually religious principle, welcomes any excuse for putting aside the high and holy duties which lie between God and the soul. Men are naturally averse from that purity in thought and deed; naturally reluctant to exercise that strict and watchful care, which the Church requires of all who come to this holy sacrament. If, conscious of cherishing sin, they resolve not to put it away, how can they have a heart to the

painful and mortifying duty of self-examination?—"To repent them truly of their former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life," implies a depth of humility, an extent of moral courage, and a patient endurance often of self-reproach, from which nature shrinks, and which is met only by grace. Nor will faith, even "in God's mercy through Christ" avail, unless it be "a *lively* faith"—a faith from which springs a willing obedience with a holy love, in proof of its vitality: whilst "a *thankful* remembrance" of "his death," and the blessings bequeathed to us thereby, cannot otherwise be shown to be sincere than by a faithful adherence to the commands He left us in his life. Perhaps, however, the most difficult part of Christian duty yet remains, in the injunction that we come to the holy table "*in charity with* ALL *men.*" Many there are who find it harder to forgive a fellow-creature, than to humble themselves before their God. Overbold, however, is the man who approaches the table of his Lord till this charity reign in his heart; for it is not the minister, but his blessed Master, Jesus Christ, who has declared, that with respect to its authority and obligations, duty towards our neighbour is like even unto duty towards our God. Failure in the one is, before Heaven, accounted failure in the other. And our daily course continually calls forth exercise of this charity. Daily do we find occasion to forgive them who trespass against us: at least, they are few and favoured who pass through life without finding in the collision of worldly interests their actions often misrepresented, their words perverted, their motives maligned: or who of us is so successful in making for peace, but that enemies arise

to persecute in adversity, to envy in prosperity, and at all times to tempt our Christian patience, try our Christian love, and call for the exercise of our Christian forbearance? Yet even with these must *he* be in charity who would come to the holy table of the Lord. Is the Church thus strict, even to severity, in her requisitions? Her stern inflexibility of principle springs alike from deep and anxious care for the welfare of her sons, and a high and holy reverence towards her great and glorious Founder. The cross of Christ is her glory. She wills that the Name of Christ be magnified, and immortal souls redeemed thereby. She invites therefore, not the worldly and the careless, not the harsh and ungentle, not the partial penitent or the self-deceiving heart, but the sincere and resolved soul, who stedfastly purposing to lead a new life, flees to the Saviour for grace which may sanctify a lowly penitence, confirm a brave resolve, and unite the faithful with their Saviour and their God.

Whilst then you again and again impress upon the minds of your children the importance, the privileges, and the value of these holy mysteries—and you cannot impress upon them these points too frequently or too strongly—teach them to receive gratefully the salutary warnings of the Church, whereby she would lead them to a due preparation for receiving those mysteries to their souls' everlasting good. Are the requisitions strong?—Sin is strong, against which they are directed. Is sin strong, and are you tempted to be discouraged at the thought?—Grace is stronger still; and will be sufficient for you [1]. Anxious there-

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice,

fore for the welfare of her children, in time and in eternity, the Church does not relax the requisitions—God forbid she should! They are our life.

As a parent, do not be discouraged in teaching this, or any other summary of Christian faith which the Church has provided for the use of the young, because the inquiring mind of your child may not be able to comprehend, in their fulness, all the points of doctrine therein. You are like one who sowing in his field or garden the seed, whose fruit or flowers he looks to gather in due season, wisely sows betimes; knowing that if he be not beforehand in sowing and planting, not only will nothing good spring up, but thorns, and weeds, and briars will naturally preoccupy the ground, and leave him the double labour of removing what is evil, before he can establish what is good. It is for this, among other reasons, that we are graciously encouraged to bring young children to Christ, that they may be *early* imbued with the knowledge of his love towards them, and of their duty

that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." The words in which this answer is conveyed are not less remarkable than animating and consolatory. The petition is from an individual soul, under sharp and trying temptation. The answer is from God; conveying a truth not only of particular but of universal application. It is first indeed an assurance to St. Paul, individually, of aid to help in time of need—"My grace is sufficient for thee:" the *reason* however for that sufficiency of grace is added in terms which involve a general principle, and which evince, most happily for us, that the blessing conveyed in the promise to the individual extends universally. Divine grace is *always* sufficient: Divine strength is perfected in weakness, *wherever* that weakness is found—whether in the apostle's heart under *his* trials, in your heart under *yours*, in your children's heart under *theirs*.

towards Him, before the world has blunted the sharper feelings of youth, and deadened its sense of duty and of gratitude[1]. When therefore any try to dissuade you from inculcating gospel truths upon your child before they are comprehended by him, you have a ready and two-fold reply. First, you are obeying the solemn will of God. Secondly, you are but acting, with respect to your child's spiritual and eternal welfare, as you do in reference to his worldly advancement. You take good heed that he is taught well in all things necessary for the state of life he may be called upon to fill; instructed in those branches of art and science necessary to his prospering therein: though you well know, that to whatever height in knowledge he may eventually attain, the elements of all knowledge, and the principles of all art, even of the simplest, must be instilled into the mind *early*; long before it is capable of comprehending those elements, and of appreciating the value of those principles; or can it be expected, that parents,—who anxious for the children of their love, carefully choose for them that course of life which they think most conducive to their worldly advancement, and in order that they may pursue it successfully, themselves make often every sacrifice of

[1] It can never be a valid reason for not teaching to a child the doctrines of the gospel, that they are above his comprehension. If such reason could hold good, children would be taught nothing. As when the mind strengthens with added years, they learn to understand and apply those elements of art and science which were taught them in their earliest years, so, as they grow up, you may humbly trust they will value and apply those religious principles, which during the same early age you had endeavoured to instil into them, and which they may haply remember when you shall have been called to your God.

their own individual comfort—can it be expected that they should not choose for those dear ones that course of religious life which they think most conducive to their *eternal* good? Shall they be contented to choose only where this world's advantage is concerned, and be indifferent as to fixing those principles, in the adoption of which is involved man's everlasting happiness? Cruel as would be parents, who left the worldly respectability and comfort of their children to chance, it were more cruel still to leave the mind of a child unfixed in the religious faith, upon the fallacious pretence of leaving the choice to his own unbiassed reason. It would be as if a parent's hand should launch his child upon the waves of this troublesome world, without sail, or rudder, or compass; leaving him to be tossed about with every wind of doctrine; and, deserting him in his desolateness, at last suffer the vessel to drive before the wind, and so make shipwreck. Fear not then to teach to your child that these holy mysteries—these blessed sacraments, as laid down in the Catechism—are the proper object of his faith. If indeed the Church had taken upon herself to frame those doctrines; if of herself she had enjoined those sacraments; if she had herself attached to them their allotted benefits, and fixed the appointed conditions of their reception, the fool in his folly were more wise than she. But, as you well know from the Holy Scriptures, these things are not so. She bids, only where God commands. She invites, only where God calls. She only faithfully executes the solemn trust committed to her. The blessing which she is commissioned to promise, she dare not weaken by lack of fidelity in declaring the conditions; and the authority, under which

she acts, she dare not compromise [1]. If any presume to question the appointed mode by which the heavenly blessings of union with God and his Christ, is sought in this holy sacrament; cavilling at its simplicity, and therefore reluctant to try its efficacy; they are like the once proud and haughty Naaman, who, in his worldly spirit scorning to be healed by the simple waters of Jordan, looked for healing to the rivers of renown in the land of his forefathers, but looked in vain [2]. Well if they be like that famed Syrian in his *changed* state; when, yielding to the earnest solicitations of his servants, he resolved to bend his haughty soul to the means enjoined; however simple, and however once despised. He washed in Jordan seven times; and lo! he was healed! Did repentance and faith lead to blessing in *his* case, and shall they fail of blessing in our own? Be it our part then to heed well the requisitions which our Church demands from all those who come to the supper of the Lord, and abide them. "Repent we truly of our former sins; stedfastly purpose to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men."

[1] Refer to note, page 200.

[2] 2 Kings, v. 12—14: "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONFIRMATION.

By the time your child thus far understands the nature of his christian covenant, as it is laid down in the Church Catechism[1], it will be your duty, and doubtless your delight, to prepare him for the solemn ordinance of Confirmation — an occasion of deep interest, and one by duly observing which you may entertain a humble hope that he will receive much and permanent benefit.

You will instruct him first in the nature of this ordinance; and he will then at once from that judge for himself, how reasonable and fitting a thing it is that in due season he take opportunity to attend an ordinance so holy in its appointment, and so profitable, to those who heedfully regard it. The very term—Confirmation—implies some preceding rite; the person confirmed completing something which was left unfinished. Taught therefore, as your children will have been by the Catechism, that they entered into covenant with God in their infancy, by godfathers and godmothers, they will comprehend without difficulty the propriety

[1] This account of the two sacraments was not added to the Catechism till the time of King James the First. It was then thought desirable, that the young Christian should be thus specially instructed in their nature and institution, their requisitions and benefits; in order that he might more seriously feel and better understand the necessity of seeking, by prayer and holy obedience, the continual assistance of the Holy Spirit, as the appointed means whereby he might renovate continually that spiritual life, which first vouchsafed to them in Baptism, is still further assured to them at Confirmation. Being thus instructed, he is admitted, after Confirmation, to the Table of the Lord.

of *confirming*, in their own persons, the promises and vows then made by others for them; and of solemnly, before the Church and in the presence of their fellow-creatures, owning themselves responsible agents in the sight of God, as his servants in Christ Jesus; not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but rejoicing publickly, before God and man, to make a confession of *Him*, who will in mercy, as you humbly trust, confess them before God and angels. The ordinance formed part of the Jewish ritual[1]. Being, however, an act which is rather declaratory of faith previously professed, than a special act of faith entered upon, it is little changed under the gospel dispensation: observed

[1] Indeed, the analogy between the Jewish and the Christian dispensations is equally striking and instructive. Thus, though circumcision under the law was superseded by baptism under the gospel, the end and object of each was the same—each being the appointed door whereby, under the several dispensations, infants should *enter* into covenant with God. So, the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, often offered, being no longer necessary when the eternal Lamb of God had offered up himself once for all, the Jewish passover was superseded by the Christian *Sacrament* of the Lord's Supper. And in these ordinances severally was to be sought grace for enabling the parties to *continue* true to the conditions of their covenant. The change of these commemorative and sanctifying ordinances was consistent with the nature of the two dispensations, of which they were respectively a part. The Law, severe in its enactments, and delivered in all the terror of the Divine Majesty, *admitted* men within its holy pale, by the severe and painful ordinance of circumcision, and *continued* them therein by virtue of the daily sacrifice with blood. The gospel *admits* to its privileges all men by the holy but easy rite of baptism, and *continues* them therein by the simple yet sanctifying ordinance of the supper of the Lord. And further, as circumcision and the passover were united by the ordinance which required Jewish children about the age of thirteen to appear in the temple and promise for themselves to keep the law of Moses into which they had been circumcised, so the link which unites our two Sacraments, is *Confirmation*.

however now by us under apostolical authority, it is administered according to apostolical practice, and stands sanctified by the example of our blessed Lord himself. The object of the rite, under either dispensation, is the same; that the youthful servant of God, having been admitted into that holy service in infancy by baptism, as of old by circumcision—before he could be conscious of his act, and when others engaged, on his part, for the due fulfilment of duties attached to that service—should in due time, as he advanced to years of discretion, relieve his sponsors of their obligation, and stand himself bound to fulfil all the promises and vows they in his infancy made for him.

The requisite preparation for admission to this solemn rite, is stated in the introduction to the service—that the child be able to "say the Creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, and also answer to such other questions as in the short catechism are contained." The Church evinces here her wonted wise forethought; and would thus both encourage you to fix early in the minds and hearts of your children, those Christian principles upon which must be based Christian character, and assist you in the good work. The day must come when, if God spare their lives, they will find those principles beyond price. They will find them a rallying point against evil counsels; against the open attacks of the infidel, and the subtle fallacies of the sceptic. They will be enabled at once to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the faith that is in them. To whatever trials they may be called; whatever sorrows they would fain forget; whatever wounds of the soul they would heal; whatever difficulties they would

meet well—principles are at hand, shedding around their powerful influence; regulating the affections; and arming the soul against all contingencies. Even if as your child grows old, clouds of disappointment and sorrow darken his latter days, thus sustained, he is never broken down. Over the dark realities of life, a spirit of light and joy will yet be diffused, in a calm and steady faith; and in a hope, free from the fear of evil. Scorning the cold philosophy of unbelief, he adopts the nobler philosophy of the gospel, and true to the Lord his Redeemer, abides by the faith he professes, rises above his trials, and goes on his way rejoicing. You would doubtless wish such to be the course of your dear child. O! then persevere in engraving deeply on his understanding and heart the principles in question—they will arm him against *every* enemy of his soul—they will arm him against himself[1];

[1] It is a beautiful remark of the excellent Bishop Horne, that "when *principles* remain, practices may be altered and amended; but *those* once *gone*, there remains no further hope of a reformation; because there is then nothing to ground one upon." He proceeds, in a truly apostolical spirit to urge upon those who themselves value Christian principles, the wisdom and consistency of sparing no time or pains in fixing them in the hearts of children, or of others for whose welfare they may haply be concerned. His counsel is sound. Suppose your child who is now pursuing his bright untiring course, healthful in mind and body; cheery of heart, for as yet he knows not care; suppose him in after years to be a child of sorrow—*some* sorrow he *must* have; and he *may* have many sorrows*.—Suppose his heart, like some torn, shattered tree, beaten down by affliction; all its freshness lost; its bloom all withered! Lo! the dew of heaven's blessing still remains for the righteous, to refresh, to strengthen, to renew! Are his feelings strong? young in years, is he strong in intellect, in energy, in powers? Place over him the

* John xvi. 33.

or, to adopt the illustration used in this admirable service, "they will edify him"—build him up a holy temple to the Lord [1]. Having learned the solemn

only sure guard—stronger principles. Is he gifted with high talents? instil into his breast higher honour in the use of them. Are his views noble? Is he scornful of whatever is unjust and base and ungenerous? Teach him that since in a world of sin, he must meet with the wicked as with the good, with the false as with the pure, with the selfish as with the generous, so being a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, he must meet even the despitefulness of pride, and the blasphemy of wicked wit, and the coldness of selfishness—he must meet all, with a spirit meek as it is courageous, quiet as it is firm. Then if called to grief and to bear his cross, he will remember the man of sorrows who bare the cross before him—*; if worn down by care and disappointment, and poverty, he will look to Him, who even had not where to lay his head, but is now exalted far above all heavens, and is gone thither to prepare a place for his faithful ones †. In pain and in misery he will think upon his Lord and Master, who endured agony even unto death; and in that thought he will find comfort even in the deepest desolation of his heart; for he will feel that the servant must never expect to be "above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord ‡—enough that the one be *as* his Master; the other, *as* his Lord!" O! the inestimable value of Gospel-principles! In life they are our safety—in death, our joy! Strive then under all difficulties and discouragements, to fix them firmly in the heart of your child; in after years, when you shall have passed away, but when trials shall test his Christian soldiership, and he rise victorious over them, armed with these principles with which your wise care had furnished him, O! with what feelings of gratitude, full to overflowing, will he pour from his heart's deepest recesses his thanks for that care! How earnestly will he call down blessing on his sainted Mother's memory!

[1] "To the end that confirmation may be ministered to the more *edifying* of such as shall receive it—" The term itself is highly expressive, taken in its first sense: for though generally used to signify, instruction and improvement, its exact meaning is, "to build up a house." The Church therefore, when she enjoins the Catechism to be learned of young persons as a preparative for admission to the

* Matt. xxvi. 24. † John xiv. 2. ‡ Matt. x. 24, 25.

promise and vow made for him in his baptism, by godfathers and godmothers, he feels that it is a reasonable service in which he now engages; ratifying and confirming the promised vow with his own mouth and consent, openly before the Church; promising that by the grace of God, he will "evermore endeavour himself faithfully to observe such things, as he by his own confession hath assented unto."

The candidates for confirmation, having been thus monished as to the object of the holy rite itself, and the qualifications required in those who are about to enter upon it, are asked—"do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things, which your godfathers and godmothers then undertook for you!" The question is so searching, and solemn, that each individual is directed to answer for himself individually; as in a compact between God and his soul. The answer is simple and impressive; "I DO"—an answer involving so strong an obligation to a life of holy faith and holy practice, that you would do well to instruct your children as to the fuller meaning and purport of it.

I DO—solemnly, and in the presence of Almighty

rite of confirmation, signifies, that by the principles of faith there laid down, the soul, according to St. Paul's comparison of it to a building, may be built up a holy "temple to the Lord." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God." Such is the Apostle's startling remonstrance to the Corinthians, warning them that they defile not themselves by sin. 1 Cor. iii. 16.

God, to whom all hearts are open, renew my Baptismal vow.

I DO—of my own free will, and in my own person, bind myself to renounce the devil and all his works; the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; so that I will not follow nor be led by them. I renounce them all [1].

I DO—with glad and holy reverence for the word of God, from which they are taken, believe all the articles of the Christian faith, contained in the summaries thereof, or creeds; as adopted by the Church. I believe in God my heavenly Father; to live in whose fear shall be my study; to gain whose love and favour, my delight. I believe in God the Son, my Almighty Redeemer; the only meritorious sacrifice for my sins, the only mediator between God and man, the only Saviour of a lost and guilty world. I believe in God the Holy Ghost, the sanctifier of my soul, my only source of sanctification and true wisdom; my only sure and unfailing comfort.

I DO—bind myself to keep God's holy will and commandments; and not merely on this solemn occasion, but "all the days of my life to walk in them." Religion shall be the uniform habit of my life. In all I do, or say, or think, God's honour, and my soul's eternal welfare, shall be kept in view. I will remember, that as He is present, *his* will must be mine. What would be offensive to Him, shall be renounced; what would be pleasing to Him, *that* shall be fulfilled [2].

I DO therefore—thus take upon myself those promises and vows made for me at my Baptism by my

[1] See from page 81 to 85. [2] Page 88.

godfathers and godmothers. I do hold myself pledged to them by every solemn and holy consideration which can bind man to his God. I do boldly, before men, confess myself a member of Christ's Church, a believer in his doctrines, a follower of his precepts. I leave to others to be ashamed of the crucified Saviour. To me He is my glory and my joy, even here; and faith leads me on to the animating hope, that hereafter He will not be ashamed of me, but before assembled worlds confess me as his own, and be my joy and my glory for ever[1].

There are few occasions more affecting to a congregation, than when children, thus assembled, renew their covenant with God; and each pronounces the irrevocable "I DO." As the words fall upon the ear, and the young bright varied voices mingle with full harmony, in a strain which faith bids us trust may gain acceptance with their heavenly Father—what deep feelings of mingled anxiety and hope throb through every heart! how fervent the secret prayer of parents, friends, and fellow-christians, that by divine grace the vow now recorded in heaven may be followed by heaven's favour; and that no after faithlessness stain the record, and so risk forfeiture of the blessing.

To relieve this solemn promise of the weight of despair on the one hand, lest human infirmity fail to fulfil it; and of the charge of presumption on the other, lest it be supposed made in a trust upon man's

[1] It is highly desirable that children, when they go to be confirmed, carry with them their Prayer-books; that they may more attentively take their share in the service; especially by answering to the question, promptly and *audibly*.

strength and good resolutions, the Church follows it up by a distinct avowal, that "our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth:" upon whom therefore we are dependant alike for spiritual as for bodily strength; for if He it is who made us, of course whatever powers we have, of mind or body, must be derived from Him; and to Him we raise our cry, because He heareth and answereth prayer. How completely does this avowal humble man's strength, and shame man's merits! How does it glorify God's mercy, and exalt God's power! How heartily do we "bless the name of the Lord, henceforth, world without end!" It shows also still more fully and strikingly the value of this holy ordinance, by which the members of Christ's Church are confirmed in the blessed privilege of asking and receiving that spirit of grace, to help their infirmities, and make even the weak to be strong in the Lord, who "heareth our prayers, and letteth our cry come unto him."

The congregation are then called upon to address the throne of mercy on behalf of those about to be confirmed; and the beginning of the prayer is an appeal to God, that as at their Baptism these children were received into his family, according to the mode prescribed by Jesus Christ; even by water and the Holy Ghost, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and were then admitted, being regenerate, to the privileges of their new and spiritual birth [1]; even forgiveness of all their sins [2] then,

[1] Page 104.

[2] By the expression in this prayer "forgiveness of all their sins," we must understand, not such a forgiveness as would necessarily extend to future offences; but a forgiveness of sins before their

and an assurance of it on the prescribed conditions, for the time to come—so He would now give added measures of his grace, as they would have added need of his strength; being daily more engaged in a busy wicked world; where, without these "manifold gifts of grace," their own strength would be but weakness. Prayer therefore is humbly offered up for "the spirit of wisdom and understanding;" that they may have a right judgment in all things: for "the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength;" whereby they may rightly estimate the value of heavenly things, and be strong in the virtues of spiritual life: for "the spirit of knowledge and true godliness;" which may lead them to that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation: and for that "spirit of the holy fear of the Lord," which is the beginning of all wisdom. So entirely does the Church teach her children to trust in the Lord, and follow the wise guidance of his spirit, holiness, and righteousness, all the days of their life!

CHAPTER XXVII.

PRAYER FOR THE CONFIRMED.

"Defend, O Lord . . . . everlasting kingdom."

At this point in the service, the Bishop having received from the assembled children a pledge that

Baptism; whether of original sin in infants, or of that and of actual sins in adults; and an assurance of future forgiveness upon future repentance; for in Christ Jesus, as we know to our joy, "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Ephes. i. 7. Col. i. 14.

they renew their baptismal vow; "ratifying and confirming the same in their own persons;" proceeds in his apostolical authority, and with "laying on of hands" after apostolical usage, to confirm them in their baptismal privileges[1]: accompanying the act with a prayer for them so comprehensive, yet so full; conveyed in so beautiful a strain of mingled humility and faith; breathing so endearing a spirit of regard for their best interests in time and eternity, and commending them to the care of the Lord, in language so earnest, so devout, so heavenly, that to hear it without the most affecting emotions would seem hardly possible. How earnestly does the Church in that prayer commend them, each individually, to the protection of Almighty God! With how tender care does she place them under the shadow of that wing, which is spread over the whole family of the faithful—a shadow from the heat, a refuge from the storm, a defence against every enemy[2]! How anxiously, as their spiritual Mother, does she look forward through the long perspective of their future years, and extend her supplication for extended grace, that they "may continue God's *for ever!*" As your listening ear hearkeneth to that prayer, with what fervour does your heart respond! —for who knoweth what trials await them for whom you pray. *Now*, all appears bright. Youth and health, and prosperity, now pour a radiant sun-light o'er their path of life, which it were wrong indeed not to enjoy; yet equally wrong would it be not to prepare the soul to meet those changes and chances with

[1] Hence St. Paul, Heb. vi. 2, terms Confirmation, "the laying on of hands."

[2] Isaiah xlix. 2. Psalm xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7; lxiii. 7. Matt. xxiii. 37.

which our mortal life aboundeth; and which *may* happen to *them*. By what surer mode—rather, by what other mode, than the aid of the Holy Spirit from on high, can you look that they be able to meet those changes with safety to the soul!

The prayer proceeds to implore that these children of God "may *daily increase* in his Holy Spirit more and more, till they come to his everlasting kingdom." Thus fully does the doctrine of the Church harmonize with the word of God. The life of the soul is to be sustained by continual supplies of its spiritual food, day by day; even as the body by the food appointed for its support: day by day must we pray for the spirit to keep alive the soul, as for bread to keep alive the body: and as the body strengthens to manhood by the use of its appointed food, so will the soul, by the use of the means thereto ordained, strengthen, "till we all come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ[1]." Thus the presumption of assurance is for ever checked. The Christian is always in *progress*; even to the end of life[2]. Besides, his is indeed a favoured course, who

[1] Page 222.

[2] Ephes. iv. 13. It is one of the weaknesses of our fallen nature, that either on the attainment of any unexpected good, or the approach of any unforeseen evil, we are often carried beyond our calm discretion. Thus, when the young Christian, warmed into new life by the spirit vouchsafed for Christ's sake, glows with disregard of the world, with honour to his heavenly Father, with love to his Saviour, with reliance on his Sanctifier, and with ardent aspirations after that spiritual perfection, to attain which must be ever our aim, though, with St. Paul, we never can reach it here—under these high wrought feelings, he is led by the Church "to be sober, and watch unto prayer." He is reminded that such good resolutions, as they are

finds not daily need of grace to meet his daily succession of trials, firmly and resignedly. Nay, the heart now perhaps buoyant with success and high hopes, may ere long be stricken down by some disappointment, rendering prudence vain, industry fruitless; frustrating the best intentions; and withering the best feelings of honour and affection. When experience has taught the young the sad lesson, to doubt often the sincerity of profession; taught them that all are not guileless as themselves—the dream of trust and hope broken—what other power than that of religion can *then* soothe the tortured feelings, and bring again rest and peace and joy? Or, suppose a mind, thoughtless of eternity so long as strength and activity are vouchsafed, and altogether so occupied by the stir and excitement of things present, as to heed not the future—how can such a mind be brought at last to see its danger and its duty, except by the influence of this Holy Spirit, for the daily increase of which the Church so devoutly prays? And well does her object

the fruits of the Spirit, so they can be matured and brought to good effect, only by the *continued daily* influence of the same Spirit. The stronger therefore our faith, the deeper should be our humility.

The analogy existing between natural and spiritual life—here adopted by our Church on the authority of our Lord—is specially instructive on this point. Of either life, the infant is for a time unconscious. Gradually the several powers begin to develope themselves; and the child exercises them at first without much determination of purpose, but yet so as to indicate life: and if due nourishment be supplied, their powers strengthen. Hence St. Paul's happy thought, when directing his Hebrew converts as to their spiritual progress, he exhorts them to advance in Christian doctrine, and not be content merely with the elements and first principles of the Gospel. "Milk," saith he, "for babes;" "but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age." How earnestly the Church insists upon this doctrine, all her services afford ample evidence.

justify her care. The final object of her earnest prayer for these children is; that whether their course be with pain and sorrow, or with ease and joy; whether they pass hence in youth, with all life's hopes freshly budding into promise, or "in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season[1];" they may at last find their home in heaven, in the bosom of their Father and their God; and so "come to his everlasting kingdom."

The Bishop and the congregation having then severally commended each other to the care and blessing of the Lord and his Spirit, all present kneel down; and with one accord make common supplication in the prevailing form of words which the Saviour himself did teach us.

Each petition, so truly comprehensive in this divine prayer, seems to supply fit and apposite reflections for the occasion. When can young Christians approach God more hopefully as their heavenly Father, than in the hour which has confirmed them in the privileges of that new birth; that new spiritual relation towards the family of God, which was first vouchsafed to them at Baptism; and in reference to which the Church pours forth her earnest prayer to the Almighty, that his "*fatherly* hand may ever be over them." The protection of an earthly father they have known to their joy; and they feel that henceforth it will be their honour and their safeguard, their defence and their glory, to be under the protecting wing of a heavenly Father. To hallow his name therefore will be considered an imperative duty. And the duty will

[1] Job v. 26.

be held binding, not as to the name itself only; but to whatever is called thereby. Thus though the first care will be not to take that name in vain, or to use it irreverently; not less care will be felt necessary with respect to the holy day, called by the name of the Lord; the holy word, written in the name of the Lord; the Holy Spirit sent forth in the name of the Lord. A mind filled with this reverence for the name of the Almighty, cannot but devoutly long for the coming of his kingdom—that it may come, with power and authority ruling in the hearts of men here on earth, and eventually may come with joy and glory in a future state; established for ever in happiness as in holiness, and shared by those the faithful in Christ Jesus, who suffering with Him here on earth, may hope to reign with Him hereafter in heaven [1]. This hope however implies a resolved obedience—a fixed determination to do what is commanded, and to leave undone what is forbidden. It also involves a noble ambition so to obey, that even the servants around God's throne in heaven shall not be more sincere and unreserved in their devotedness than the humble petitioner now supplicating before the throne of grace. As angels do the will of their God in heaven, even so he prays to do the will of the same God his heavenly Father on earth. And can it be, that any offer the prayer in vain? Surely the heartfelt supplication of such assembled worshippers will bring down an answer of peace! Thus resolved, the young Christian enters upon the duties of that state

[1] Rom. viii. 17. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

of life, to which it may have pleased God to call him; prepared to do his duty diligently and honestly; acting as unto the Lord, and striving to please *Him*. Therefore whilst he labours industriously and cheerfully, he trusts for success to the means supplied by his "Father who is in heaven;" and from Him he looks to receive "day by day his daily bread." But the young will find that no sooner do they enter upon the duties of active life, than in the collision of worldly interests offences will arise, which all their care cannot prevent. Thence spring often envy and strife; sometimes injustice and wrong. For this state of things they must be prepared; and must meet it in the spirit which the word of God directs. It is very trying indeed to young and ingenuous minds to find friendly intention rejected, honest dealing overreached, actions misinterpreted, motives maligned, and truth perverted; whilst cunning and wrong seem to triumph. They are taught to rejoice, not in iniquity, but in the truth. It cannot therefore cause surprise, that when they individually suffer injury from such iniquity, indignation should spring up. Yet is forgiveness never to be withheld. If at least we would be forgiven of God, against whom *we* trespass, by sins, negligences, and ignorances, *we* must first *forgive* those who trespass against us. This solemn occasion is a fit season for adopting with a firmer resolution the principle thus laid down by a voice from heaven [1]. For this purpose let them gain a habit of self-restraint; "slow to anger, slow to wrath." A really noble spirit is always placable; and he that is "slow to anger is

[1] See page 222.

better than the mighty." Of temptations, the world is full; and the season of youth is especially open to them. Hence the young, in offering their petition "lead us not into temptation," must give the plain and intelligible proof of their sincerity in prayer, by themselves avoiding the dangers against which they pray. Do they pray their heavenly Father to "lead them not into temptation," with what care should they remove themselves from it—that they do not willingly pursue those objects, associate with those companions, or encourage those thoughts which their religion and their conscience tell them are wrong, and by pursuing which they would bring themselves into evil[1]—otherwise their petition will be offered in vain. How can men expect God to deliver them from evils, into which they have willingly and of deliberate counsel brought themselves? The same God who sees fit

[1] When *parents* form part of the congregation, and join in offering this petition, what anxious thoughts must crowd their minds, as they look upon the dear child about to enter into a world of temptation upon its own responsibility! What added fervor must this thought give to *their* devotions! How earnestly must their heart-felt prayer ascend to the throne of heaven, that grace may indeed be poured down upon their child in full abundance, with all its elevating and softening influence—raising the soul above the temptations of the world, and preparing it to receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save to the uttermost those who trust therein! Armed with the whole armour of God, the youthful servant of Christ is ready to fight "the good fight of faith;" and even the tender mother fears not to send him forth, so armed; knowing that whilst hearts, swayed by inferior motives and led by merely earthly courage, quail and give way, her child gains through Christ the great captain of his salvation, a stern uncompromising spirit, with less of earth in it than heaven; raising the youthful heart high above the fear of man, and sustaining it, immoveably, on the sure protection of its God.

to try the faith and hope of his servants now, and permit temptations to assail them, will with them as with Job, be at hand to strengthen their faith and confirm their hope; and "will with the temptation"—or trial—"make a way to escape." Let the young then "flee from temptation" and "resist the devil" when he brings before them wicked thoughts; "so will he flee from them." Failure is all our own; success is ours, through God, who helpeth us. Fear ye not: the Lord himself, after much conflict perhaps, yet successfully at the last, will deliver you from all evil: for his is the kingdom—supreme over all; his the power—mighty to deliver! his the glory—to save his people for his honour's sake! Amen! even so be it, Thou Lord and God of truth!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE COLLECT.

"Almighty . . . . . world without end."

THIS Collect is framed in the full spirit of the Gospel. It combines the deepest humility under a sense of human weakness and unworthiness, with the firmest faith in the divine power and mercy: our weakness and unworthiness being no excuse for error, since God, by his covenanted power, "maketh us both to will and to do those things that be good and acceptable unto his Divine Majesty." The Bishop therefore, as the spiritual Father of the Church; which is the family of God upon earth; having "after the example of

the holy Apostles, laid his hands "upon the young Christians, to certify them, by that sign, of God's favour and gracious goodness towards them," proceeds in a most affecting strain of earnest supplication to pray for them; and in terms implying that all must be vain, without the *continued* protection of the Almighty. *His* fatherly hand it is which must "*ever* be over them;" or in vain will the Church, with parents and friends, and fellow-christians, have prayed blessing upon them. "His Holy Spirit must *ever* be with them;" or in vain will man's holiest care and wisest counsel lend their aid to guide aright. "Of his word there must be both knowledge and obedience," if that path be kept or found, which leadeth to life eternal. To attain that life is the great aim to which the Church in all her services most anxiously directs and encourages us. Hers is the constant care that we never forget to ask ourselves as to the *consequences* of our course of life. "Will it bring peace at the *last?*" Whatever thought, word, or action, will *not* bring peace *then*, is to be shunned *now*. And as no human power can surely direct into the right path, or keep therein the erring soul of man, so the Church reposes all her trust for these her children upon the gracious influence and unerring wisdom of the Spirit from above; that so sanctified and so guided, "in the end they may obtain everlasting life, through our Lord Jesus Christ," by whose holy name they are called; and who, as in his infinite love He is *willing* to save, so in his infinite power He is *able* to save; for "with the Father and the Holy Ghost he liveth and reigneth ever, one God, world without end. Amen!"

THE PRAYER.

"O Almighty . . . . Saviour Jesus Christ."

As the preceding Collect was a truly evangelical supplication on behalf of the children confirmed, so this prayer is a concise and beautiful supplication for *all* the members of Christ's Church. Reminded by the scene before us of our own solemn Baptismal vows, renewed as they have been by us from time to time, at the holy table of the Lord, and gathering accumulated strength from every added year of life, we earnestly beseech the great and glorious God, who is Almighty and everlasting, to take us *all* to his care; "soul and body;" that, created by his power, sustained by his providence, and quickened by his grace, we may also, if directed, sanctified, and governed by Him, "walk in the way of his laws;" in all holy fear "do the work of his commandments;" and "through his most mighty protection, here and *ever*, be preserved in body and soul:" for, though "the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto the God who gave it[1]," faith is never extinguished in the Christian's heart, that "at the last," his body, having even in its dust been protected by the power which created it, shall rise again to new life, made like unto Christ's glorious body, be then reunited to his soul, and so live for ever in the bliss and glory of heaven.

All this we pray and hope for Jesus Christ, his sake!

[1] Eccles. xii. 7.

THE BLESSING.

"The blessing of God . . . . . remain with you for ever."

As the Bishop pronounces the blessing, each heart among us must surely respond, with the earnestness of one, who feels that he has an individual interest in it; for the words invoke upon the whole congregation the favour of that great and glorious Being, in whose name—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—we ourselves in years long past, first entered into covenant with God; then ratified it at our Confirmation as these children have done; and have since, from time to time, renewed it at the holy table of the Lord. Can there be one of the assembled numbers who does not add his own secret prayer, that "*the blessing*" thus invoked "*of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,*" may be vouchsafed to every heart; may "*be upon them*" all; and with children and parents, the young and the aged, the rich and the poor alike, lead to peace in life; to hope in death; to joy in heaven; and so, "*remain with them for ever.*"

Nor must parents be discouraged in thus "taking care that their child be brought to the Bishop, to be confirmed by him," because some of those confirmed, may in after-life evidence little of their sense either of the obligations or the privileges then renewed. Suppose that some there be upon whom the good impression made by this solemn service be merely transitory; some even, who soon rush into all the dangers of a worldly course, forget their christian vows, and cast away their christian hopes—still, parents have done what their duty to God and their child imperatively

required of them: they have given to their children's minds a determined purpose, by giving heaven as their object, and have led them to One, who by his word and spirit can and will give strength to attain that object—even to a heavenly Father; a protector who can never be lost but by their own fault; a merciful Redeemer, able and willing to save to the uttermost; and a holy Comforter, alway with them, to give peace here, and the hope of joy and glory hereafter. And the work is not the less holy because it does not in all cases seem equally successful; nor is the blessing attendant upon it less sure to the righteous, because some may, like faithless Israel of old, themselves trample it under foot. What if, under the Jewish dispensation many, after entering into covenant with God, fell from their hopes; did their falling away deter the faithful from that covenant, or weaken to them its blessing[1]? Was the guileless Nathaniel less blessed, because he shared the covenant of God with the Scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites? Was the penitent Peter less favoured of the spirit of grace, because he shared the cup of blessing with the false-hearted Judas? Or, in these days shall the unbelief of some make our faith of none effect? Rather let parents, in bringing their children to this holy ordinance, and thereby fulfilling a solemn duty, rejoice to know that God's blessing and favour always rest upon a humble and willing performance of an appointed duty. Besides, weak indeed must be the faith which carries us not on to the hope, that, as in the natural

[1] The strict and complete observance by our blessed Saviour in his youth of all the ordinances of his Church, is for ever our guide and our encouragement. "Go we, and do likewise."

the spiritual world, the seed may be long dor-
, yet not dead. It may quicken into life, even
e last hour; and though to delay due culture of
oul in which it is to spring, be an awful daring of
, who is the Lord of life and death—a proud pre-
tuous boasting of that morrow which is not in
s power to secure—yet we daily see, by how
varied ways the goodness of God fertilizes this
. How often does some unlooked for providence,
her in good or ill; some season of sickness or
ow, or some deliverance perhaps from impending
burst the death-like sleep of the soul, call into
the dormant powers of spiritual life, and lead
to the exercise of its new powers, till grace
mphs! That this animating hope is well founded,
experience of life affords ample testimony. Though
efore your children will not long mingle with the
d, ere they find its smiles enticing them from the
of God and its frowns withdrawing them from
love; temptation from within and from without
nding; yet "as their day, so shall be their
ngth." What if they have many a hard lesson of
ility to learn? the spirit of the meek and lowly
s is their teacher. What if their young and
rous minds meet many an ungrateful return; bene-
ce slighted; proffers of kindness coldly repulsed?
e same spirit leads them to the Saviour's example;
them bear *their* cross as He bore *his*, and follow
in the hard and difficult path of self-denial and
ility: doing good to the unthankful and evil;
loving even those who hate them. Thus, let us
r doubt, but that the prayer which the Church, on
occasion, so earnestly and affectingly offers up for

them. may at last be answered to their joy; and they themselves "daily increase in God's Holy Spirit more and more, till they come to his everlasting kingdom."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

Your children, having by Confirmation ratified their baptismal vow, binding themselves afresh to the obligations, and renewing the privileges of the first of the two sacraments of our Church, are now admitted to become partakers of the second sacrament; the Supper of the Lord. Naturally anxious that they should duly prepare themselves for so solemn an ordinance, you read with them and explain to them the service appointed for it. You well know, in your own case, the value of its aid in preparing the soul for so holy a worship. Its purely evangelical view of the great doctrines of our faith—its sentiments, its warnings, its encouragements, in strict accord with the revealed word; its wise adaptation to the wants and wishes, the fears and hopes of the humble Christian in his approach to the more immediate presence of his God; its language whether of penitence or praise, of supplication or of thanksgiving, well expressing the full feeling of a devout and ardent worshipper; and its awakening character in every part—all have long been your own admiration, and instruction, and comfort. My hope is, that the following pages may haply assist your endeavours in impressing upon the minds of your children the same admiration, leading them to benefit by

the same instruction, and training them to rejoice in the same holy consolations.

The service opens with the Lord's prayer: and *this*, in a spirit of humility, well befitting those who approach his holy table[1]. Entering upon this solemn ordinance, every worshipper must feel his heart filled with the deepest reverence and awe. Hence it is that you rejoice to give utterance to those feelings by adopting the words we are taught and commanded by Christ himself. You offer them in humility, but in hope. You trust—and it surely can be no vain trust—that for his sake, who bade you use the very words in which it is framed, they will be accepted graciously by your *Father who is in heaven! His name* you have hallowed, and you pray that it *may be hallowed* still. You rejoice in Him your spiritual King—King of kings, and Lord of lords—and gladly here obeying his laws, you pray that in others also *his kingdom* may *come*, here and hereafter. To this end you begin *on earth* the work in which angels are unceasingly engaged *in heaven*—ever *doing his will!* and on the present occasion, proving your sincerity by performing the service which now calls you, according to his word. You look trustfully to Him, to preserve soul and body—"*give us this day our daily bread*"—bread, spiritual and temporal. No unhallowed feeling fills your heart. When you pray—"*Forgive us our trespasses*"—you declare that you "*forgive those who trespass against you.*" And when you implore God—*lead us not*

[1] The peculiarly appropriate feelings which naturally arise to the mind, when offering in this affecting service the several petitions of the Lord's Prayer, will be more fully considered when the same Prayer is introduced again towards the close of the service.

into temptation;" your faith is strong that, if he should so try your fidelity, He will "*deliver you from evil*," for "he that spared not his own Son" as your Redeemer, —whom now you "remember" according to his own solemn ordinance—He will not deny his Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; but by that Spirit will make a way to escape.

PRAYER.

"Almighty God . . . . through Christ our Lord."

HAVING thus far propitiated, as we humbly trust, the great Jehovah, that He may graciously incline his ear unto us, hearken to our prayer, and accept our sacrifice, we proceed to address Him as the *Omnipresent* God —present to us his servants upon earth, even as he is to his angels in heaven. A thought this, in itself how stupendous! How sustaining and comforting to the good! to the wicked how awful and terrifying! The wicked cannot escape the notice of such a Being —the good rejoice in the certainty of his present help and consolation[1]. Are all hearts open to Him? Then the humble and the contrite fear not to approach Him, even at his holy table. True! they feel their own unworthiness to receive or ask his blessing; they

[1] Ps. xliv. 21. "If we have forgotten the name of our God, and holden up our hands to any strange god: shall not God search it out! for he knoweth the very secrets of the heart." Thus, to the good, collectively and individually—to the Church in *her* trials and to each member thereof in *his*—a sense of the divine presence is alike their protection and their joy. Ps. xlvi. 1. 5. "God is our hope and strength: a very *present* help in trouble:" "God is in the midst of her; therefore shall she not be removed: God shall help her, and that right early."

no adequate language of their own to express r sense of his mercy; yet theirs is the reflection, at soothing and animating, that since the God whom worship knoweth the very secrets of the heart, heart is open to Him; and they know that in their rt every thought is his! every fear, every hope, y wish, every affection, is centered in Him—He, r refuge whereunto they may *always* resort: their e and their confidence. Hence the lowliest and most unlearned, the trembling penitent and the rning prodigal, draw near to Him. Their *heart* is and He knoweth it: his *mercy* is *theirs*, and they ice in it. They have no desire which they would me that He should know; no secret which they ld hide from Him. Even those troubles and fears, ch they can whisper to no human ear, they gladly gratefully lay open to Him: upon Him they cast whole burden of their cares and sorrows, and ere y seal their covenant anew at this holy Sacrament, h adopts the spirit and language of David—"Try , O God, and examine my heart; see if there be any y of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way ever- ting." And here the humble spirit in which our urch has framed her services, is so eminently conspi- ous that it cannot be passed without special notice. In s placing ourselves in the more immediate presence a heart-searching God, there is indeed an apparent ldness, which in itself would seem almost bordering on presumption; were it not that the requisite purity those who so approach such a Being, is referred not ourselves, but to the Holy Spirit, for which we pray. *that* we look "to cleanse the thoughts of our arts;" to his holy inspiration we must owe it, that

as we approach the heavenly feast, every imagination may be freed from wicked and worldly and vain desires, may be made sincere in the sight of God, may be filled with perfect love towards Him, and prepared in this service "worthily to magnify his holy name, through Christ our Lord." The prayer is one of singular force and beauty; and though peculiarly appropriate as introductory to this particular service, may well dwell in our hearts, and be poured forth from our lips, *whenever* we approach our God in the service of prayer, or penitence, or praise; for if there be a consideration of special weight, more than another calculated to encourage sincerity of heart when we bear our petitions to the throne of heaven, it is the happy conviction that He who sitteth thereon, knoweth our thoughts long before. What a motive for purity of thought, and uprightness of intention! Who shall dare, Judas like, to proffer to his Saviour love and honour; and cherish sin to the betrayal of his honour? What a stern monitor against concealed and secret sin! Where is the heart not opened to Him whom we worship? What the desire, whose motive and object He knoweth not? What word or deed so secret, which sin and cunning can hide from Him? Come then, my heart; examine thy state ere thou dost approach to the Table of the Lord! If aught there be, which fear bids thee try to conceal from God, cast it from thee: conceal it thou canst not; and except by repentance there is no escape from the punishment due to it. Dost thou truly repent of the past? dost thou earnestly desire grace for the future? then rejoice that thy heart is open to the Father of spirits; rejoice that He knoweth every inmost desire of it, and that as

the secret counsels of sin and wickedness, so the secret tears of contrition and penitence are not hid from Him, with whom we have to do.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS[1].

THE ten commandments are very fitly appointed to be read in this part of the service, to remind us that as He by whose name we are called Christians, came not to destroy but fulfil the law, the object of a holy faith is a holy obedience; and that as at our baptism—the first sacrament—we did solemnly promise and vow not only to believe all which God revealed, but obey all which He commanded, "even to our life's end;" as moreover we have ratified and renewed that vow at our confirmation—so we should from time to time[2] *publicly* declare our sense of the continued force of that obligation; an obligation which comes with added weight from the responsibility of added years.

In this service, therefore, we find introduced, after each commandment, a prayer to the throne of grace, that we may keep the same not in deed only, but in heart—our obedience sanctified, and raised from action to motive. But mark, here, the beautiful consistency with which our Church preserves her spirit of Chris-

[1] These have been already fully explained, from page 159 to 195.

[2] The early Christians celebrated the communion whenever they met to worship: and in our own Church, it was wont formerly to be celebrated every Sabbath.

tian humility, and enjoins the same upon all her worshippers. We are instructed that our trust for *power* thus to incline our hearts must be in the *Lord*; and our hope that He will vouchsafe that power must spring from faith in his *mercy*. "Lord! have *mercy* upon us, and *incline our hearts* to keep this law." What an unreserved avowal, that vain are our own best endeavours, unless blessed by Him, and that his blessing, if vouchsafed at all, is *of mercy*, free and undeserved! The prayer, in itself so beautiful and scriptural, is the more appropriately thus placed in the service, as it allows a pause, brief indeed, but salutary, in which each worshipper, as the several commandments are declared, may in secret ask his own heart, "Am I clear of the offence forbidden? Have I fulfilled the duty enjoined? Am I willing to yield my heart to the guidance for which I pray!"

After the tenth commandment, the *words* of the prayer, though *not* the *spirit* of it, vary; the variation being of design, and for our further instruction. The supplication becomes still more earnest; the desire for grace still more ardent. We pray that God would not only incline our hearts to keep these laws, but that He would "*write them all* in our hearts," so that we should never forget them. Whilst some plunge into sin from daringly opposing or blindly disregarding the commandments, how many sin from living in *forgetfulness* of them! Is any one so bold, that he would sin if he remembered the penalty? Would he covet such wages as sin brings? Would he choose death? O God! in "mercy write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech Thee;" so that when temptation assails, they may also rise up as a fence against the evil

of it; remind us of Him, whose grace is at hand to aid us in all our trials; in every temptation making a way to escape: our "shield, our fortress, our deliverer."

PRAYERS FOR THE QUEEN.

As upon a just administration of the laws by those in authority, and a due observance of them by those set under them, depends the welfare of society; as moreover there is no security for the observance of human laws, except that derived from a regard to the holy law of God, from which they spring and upon which they rest their authority—a godless people being ever a lawless people—the Church proceeds now to offer up two beautiful and impressive prayers for our gracious Sovereign, for ourselves, and for all her subjects. The object of these prayers is, that by divine grace, all men may serve, in their several stations, to the glory of God, and the welfare of mankind; ever remembering the strict and solemn account they must one day give before his great tribunal. We pray that the Sovereign's heart may be so disposed and governed by that godly wisdom which is from above, that in all her thoughts, words, and works, she may bear in mind the sure future responsibility under which she lies, for a due execution of the laws, to the honour of God; "studying to preserve his people committed to her charge, in wealth, peace, and godliness:" whilst her subjects are duly to remember the authority under which she acts, and humbly obey her, "in *thee*, O God! and for *thee!*"—thy honour promoted alike by

the due observance of the laws on their part, and a due administration of them by their Sovereign. It is surely no unreasonable hope to entertain, that when thus our Sovereign, and the people under her charge, look to God for help to guide them in their several duties, and sanctify them in their mutual regard—the people obeying the laws for conscience sake toward God, and the Sovereign, with hearty love towards her people, seeking their best welfare, as herself responsible to God—it is no unreasonable hope that such a nation will be blessed of God, whose honour is thus held in remembrance. Can their united prayers, offered with one accord, with one heart, with one voice, be offered in vain?—Let but sincerity and truth wing the prayer, and who can doubt its access to the mercy-seat?

It is, moreover, a very affecting consideration, how strongly the feeling of individual regard towards the Sovereign is excited and fostered by these prayers. The heart of every pious worshipper acknowledges and rejoices in this feeling. How is it possible not to love those for whom we pray? The love, too, which when exercised towards our fellow-creatures generally evidences itself by a charity which prompteth mutual good-will, is no sooner directed towards the Sovereign, than it expands into a firm, conscientious loyalty. True religion and devoted loyalty ever go hand in hand. And as this nation, more than all the nations of the earth, may trace its unrivalled prosperity to the benign influence of Christianity and the holy sanction of the faith it promulgates; so, if it would continue that prosperity, it must continue in that faith: for the kingdoms of this world, when left to their own wisdom and

strength, soon pass away, and are as though they had never been. Stability rests only where HIS blessing rests, "whose kingdom is everlasting [1]."

THE NICENE CREED.

SINCE in partaking of the holy communion of the body and blood of Christ, we hope to renew, from time to time, the blessings of our baptismal covenant, it is very seasonably directed that we first renew our declaration of that faith on which our hope rests; quickening the flame of devotion in our hearts by recounting the glorious truths which it reveals to us—God our Father, God our Redeemer, God our Sanctifier. And this faith we declare publicly and boldly, not ashamed of Him now as our crucified Redeemer, who will one day be our glorified Judge. The form of words appointed to be used in the Communion Service, is termed the Nicene Creed, and is somewhat

[1] Surely it must strike every reflecting mind, which considers the extended influence exercised by this nation in the counsels of other nations apparently greater and mightier than ourselves, that this influence must arise from something far higher than our mere worldly power: for of ourselves, when compared to other empires of the world, it may almost be said, "Ye are fewer than any people." This influence must be traced to the fact, that here the Gospel is established and acknowledged as the revealed will of God; its doctrines honoured and promulgated, its laws recognised, its Founder confessed as our God; whilst, to prove to the world that the nation glories in the religion which it professes, and looks to receive all its blessings of truth and justice, order and strength, peace and godliness, from the mercy of God propitiated by Christ, the Apostle's exhortation forms the ground of the Church prayers and supplications "for kings, and all that are in authority under them," "through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord."

fuller than that termed the Apostles' Creed[1]. But the additions are chiefly such as were necessary to meet the particular heresy which sprang up at the time it was framed. That heresy, called the Arian heresy, had for its object to deny the divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; thus uprooting man's faith, and withering all his hopes. Hence we here affirm of Jesus, that though He "was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the virgin Mary, was made man, was crucified, and suffered, and was buried," yet was He "Light of light; very God of very God; by whom all things were made, and whose kingdom shall have no end[2]." The divinity also of the Holy Ghost is enlarged upon. He is declared to be "the Lord and Giver of life:" thus reanimating the courage of the most faint-hearted communicant. If this Spirit of power be the gift of the Father through his Son, then shall our hearts be quickened anew; we shall live here unto righteousness, in the humble but *firm* hope of living hereafter for ever in glory: because the

[1] This Creed was entitled the Nicene Creed, because it was chiefly framed at the famous council of Nice, in the north-western part of the Lesser Asia, summoned by the Emperor Constantine, and held there in the year 325. Some little additions were also made at another council in the year 381. The variations, however, from the Apostles' Creed, are not variations in articles of faith, but are so many explanatory additions to those points of faith handed down to us in the writings of the Apostles. See the observations upon the Apostles' Creed, pp. 82 and 134.

[2] How gloriously does this assurance revive the drooping heart of some patient follower of the cross, who, faithful to his spiritual King, yet finds all here to be pain, disappointment, and sorrow! How brightly does it rekindle all his glorious hopes of *that* inheritance, which, late though it be ere he gain it, *shall* be his, in the *everlasting* kingdom of his Father.

Lord of our life is supreme—who shall stay or control his power? And, as in an ordinance so solemn, the offering of penitence and thanksgiving should be with one heart and one mouth; as all, who worship together, should hold the same faith and hope; we profess our belief in the Catholic and Apostolic Church; acknowledging one baptism for the remission of sins [1], cheering our hearts with the prospect of meeting again in the resurrection of the dead, and animating ourselves to rise above all the temptations of this world, bear patiently all its frowns, and resist all its allurements, by the sure prospect of rest, and joy, and glory, "in the life of the world which is to come."

THE SENTENCES.

THE more immediate object of the sentences which follow the Creed, is to exhort the assembled congregation to a liberal, and, in proportion to their means, to a free and cheerful contribution for the relief of their poorer and afflicted brethren. The *rich* are reminded, that since God has "poured down his benefits upon them," they should be *bountiful* towards those less favoured than themselves; and "having much," should "give plenteously;" "glad to distribute," and "merciful after their *power*." The *poor* also are encouraged to this duty "after *their* power:" God measuring their charity, not by its extent, but by its proportion to their means. If they have little, let them "gladly give of

[1] With what care is this form of words drawn! and how beautiful throughout is its harmony with the unchanging word of God.—See Ephes. iv. 5.

that little; nothing doubting but that the widow's mite will be accepted favourably[1]. Indeed, every worthy motive is held out both to rich and to poor, that their charity be free and ready, neither constrained nor delayed; for life is too short to delay any duty: and by the proofs which daily experience affords of its shortness and uncertainty of time, we are continually admonished, "*while we have time*, to do good unto all men;" "to give, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver:" and daily experience tells us that if men would "reap plenteously, they must sow plenteously." Besides, they are but "lending to the Lord, who will pay again what they lay out;" and who "in the needful time of trouble" will deliver those, whether rich or poor, who, according to their power, "provide for the sick and needy;" and comfort them in their trouble.

The opening sentence, however, guards against the exercise even of charity and benevolence upon a wrong motive. The good we do is to be done, *not* with a view of gaining merit to ourselves, or winning the applause of men, but to the glory of God; and our Lord himself teaches us, that whoso *thus* exercises charity, is as one who "lets his light so shine before men," that, seeing his work to be done upon a truly religious principle, *they* also are led to give God the glory, and praise Him for the gift of that Gospel, which enforces love and good-will towards our neighbour, in proof that we love and honour our God. Hence springs unavoidably mutual good-will between the rich and the poor, the great and the lowly. God is the maker

[1] Mark xii. 43.

of them all. They are all brethren. The lowly therefore murmur not; the great vaunt not themselves. The rich man feels that he can enjoy no higher gratification than that of relieving the distresses of his brethren, and the afflicted and distressed are soothed not more by the bounty of their richer neighbour than by his sympathy. The poor of the congregation share that gratification; not only as they worship in the same holy house of God, rejoice in the same heavenly Father, the same Redeemer, the same Sanctifier, having the same hope of their final home in heaven; but also as they thus share, however humbly, in relieving the wants of those who are poorer and more destitute than themselves. Whilst the rich are shamed from hoarding up riches where the rust and moth doth corrupt, and are led to the right use of their advantages; benefiting their fellow-creatures, for the sake of God, and to the glory of God; the poor find that, before God, poverty is no plea for irreligion. They, equally with the rich, are free to gather from the Gospel, and by a holy life lay up for themselves, through Christ, treasure in heaven.

Thus carefully does the Church endeavour to bring her worshippers into a right frame of mind; leading them to do good to their fellow-creatures, for Christ's sake. And if ever these holy practical monitions might reasonably be expected to have their just influence, it would be when the hearers are about to engage in the solemn service of the Holy Communion; for then, if ever, the heart must be ready to receive the word of divine truth; the soul so fixed upon the Saviour, that every affection is purified, every feeling softened, every

thought with less of earth in it than heaven—love to God and man triumphing. In soil so prepared, who shall doubt but that the good seed will sink deep, take root, and flourish!

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH MILITANT.

"Almighty and ever living God ..... Mediator and Advocate.

HAVING thus so far let your light shine before men, by your active benevolence, that they seeing your good work of charity, and trusting that love to God is the source of your love to man, are themselves led to glorify your Father in heaven, who has given you the riches of his grace, thereby leading you liberally to distribute the bounty of his providence — you are exhorted, with the assembled congregation, to "pray for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here on earth[1]." And excellent as are all the prayers in our Church services, this seems in a more especial manner to fix our attention and regard. Its truly apostolic character, its high antiquity, its noble reliance upon the Lord and Giver of light and life for blessing, its touching reference to the loved and righteous dead, its comprehensive supplications for rulers and subjects, for rich and great, one with another, as forming together the great family of God—

[1] We were baptized as soldiers of Christ, "manfully to fight under his banner." See p. 102.

all these considerations combine to render it a prayer of the deepest and holiest interest.

In supplications for the whole state of Christ's Church we follow the apostolical injunction urged by St. Paul upon Timothy, exhorting him to "make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks for all men[1]." Nor are even these petitions offered but from a firm trust in the mercy and undeserved love of our heavenly Father, the "Almighty and everliving God." And since the most fatal danger which can happen to the Church is division, so our first care is to implore *that*, which is its surest safety, *unity*,—"that all who confess God's holy name may agree in the truth of his holy word, and live in unity and godly love:" agreeing in doctrine, in charity, in discipline. But since no human means tend more to strengthen this bond of unity in Christ's visible Church than the authority and support of kings, princes, and governors, we implore heaven's blessing upon them all; especially upon the sovereign of our own land. Since, moreover, it is alike the noblest ambition of Christian princes, and the highest aim of Christian subjects, to worship freely and in all godly quietness, to attain the privilege of so doing is the object of this petition. Sovereigns, however, in order to effect this object, must delegate their authority to others, who throughout the length and breadth of the land may duly administer the laws. Hence we further pray "for *all* who are put in *authority*," that they may "minister justice truly and *indifferently*[2]"—according to the real spirit of the laws, and without any

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 1.

[2] By the word *indifferently*, in this place, is meant "without partiality, or any respect of persons."

difference towards rich or poor, great or lowly—that punishment may fall upon guilt, and that true religion and virtue, being maintained inviolably, may for ever flourish and abound. What a noble dependence upon the guidance of heaven to give wisdom; and how sure it is, that without that guidance vain is man's wisdom! With what fervour should we offer this prayer for the welfare of our Church and nation! Thus the simplest and the poorest may lend their humble aid in promoting their country's good. What though some in their lowly station be all unknown of men, and in the wisdom of the world unpractised! God heareth the prayers of the simple: and who shall doubt but that He will favourably hear those now offered up, if they be offered up in sincerity and truth? See, too, how unreservedly, as with the flock, so also with the shepherds, safety in the way of holiness is referred to the grace of God. All the piety and learning, which may adorn the ministers of the Church of Christ[1]; all their diligent and unwearying watchfulness; their courage in meeting trial and their fortitude in enduring its afflictions; their patience under disappointed efforts, and their unfailing spirit under discouragement—*all* their exertions are as nothing without *his* blessing, who is himself wisdom and safety, consolation and righteousness.

And if the ministers and stewards of God's mysteries, at *all* times, in the execution of their office, require divine grace to execute it to the honour of God, and the welfare of his people, how much more is

[1] The prayer is offered "for all bishops and curates." By the term curate here, is meant any one to *whom* is entrusted by the Church the *care* or cure of souls.

it required when they are about to administer this his holy sacrament! What an unreserved dedication of the soul to its Saviour God! Bright indeed should be the light of devotion in those from whom others are to catch the flame! Hence the pointed supplication for both *them* and the congregation *present*. Beautifully does the prayer accord with the feelings of the minister! Forcibly does it express the emotions of his heart, about to engage in the most solemn ordinance of his religion, with the souls more immediately committed to his charge! He loves all men as brethren; for all men he prays: but towards those who are his own more especial charge, he has a feeling of anxious regard, which none else can tell. In them he has an interest, not merely for their temporal, but their eternal welfare. Their everlasting happiness is his care, and placed in his trust. Earnest therefore is his prayer, that they bring to the hearing of the word, "meek hearts and due reverence;" lest it be heard in vain. Nor are those forgotten, whom "sorrow, sickness, or any other adversity," necessarily keep back from sharing the holy service prepared for them. Reminded of our own liability to the same trials "in this transitory life," heeding the apostolic injunction to "weep with those who weep," and imploring our heavenly Father "to comfort and succour them," we are ourselves encouraged to a more active benevolence, and learn to find our own highest enjoyment in relieving the distresses of others. The closing reflection of this prayer comes home to the heart of every individual. Who has not mourned some loved one, cut off by death—neighbour, friend, or relative? Happy they who in watching the death-bed, have witnessed the

power of religion in subduing the fear of death, and giving a triumph over all its terrors. Justly do they bless the holy name of their heavenly Father, by faith in whose Gospel and through a wise and salutary fear of whose Majesty the souls of the righteous have overcome the world, and "departed this life in his faith and fear[1]." And where is one to be found so insensible

[1] In the calm and soothing hour of so solemn a service, when the voice is thus raised to praise and bless God "for all his servants departed this life in his faith and fear," and there is mingled with that voice a supplication that we also may be partakers with them of his heavenly kingdom, what heart-stirring thoughts arise to each in the prospect thus opened to us! Are you a parent? who can tell the earnestness of your secret prayer for grace so to lead your life a bright example to your children, that in your death they may bless your memory, and cheer themselves with the hope, that by following in your steps, they may at last reach that heaven where all the redeemed, the great family of God, shall meet again. Sometimes the words may fall upon the ear of those whose pious parents, though long since passed to the world of spirits, live in memory, with all the freshness of years gone by—dead, but not forgotten. Perhaps you are one of them. O how fondly do you cling to the recollection of that never-fading piety which adorned in life those you mourn! You recollect the past with holy reverence and more than earthly affection. Your heart thrills with mingled regret and resignation. You regret that all which is left to you of those parents is their example; that is ever rising up to your mind. You remember their united anxiety and self-denying exertions for your benefit. You still recollect the father's firmness, which trained you to courage*, the mother's tenderness, which was wont to excite you to your duty by its unwearied love; binding you to them with an affection to which every added year has given added strength. The tenderest of these recollections is doubtless that of the untiring devoted love, which seems all a mother's own, and

* Courage is an invaluable handmaid to religion. To be able to say to a fellow-creature, "*Nay*," when duty forbids our acquiescence, is high Christian principle. God grant it may be thine, O Christian reader!

to the warmest and the noblest feelings of which our nature is susceptible, who can forbear to adopt the affecting supplication, not only that "we may be partakers of God's heavenly kingdom," but may be "partakers of it *with them*" — the righteous dead! O the hope of this reunion! Who can say its blessedness! Who is not conscious of its power in animating Christian families to a holier and livelier service with each other here on earth, when so glorious a view is thus opened to them; so glorious a prospect of meeting again hereafter in heaven, and there serving God *together*, for *ever*!—our hope thereto resting on Him, who is the resurrection and the life, "Jesus Christ our only Mediator and Advocate."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE EXHORTATIONS TO THE HOLY COMMUNION.

As Moses, when admitted into the more immediate presence of God, was commanded to mark the special occasion by a special observance of solemnity and reverence, so our Church, in order to prepare her people for a due celebration of the holy mysteries about to be presented to them, gives previous warning of the day of their intended celebration. For this occasion she has two forms of exhortation. The first is addressed to

which you remember to have been your comfort in those early sorrows, when the youthful heart first felt the bitterness of grief, or pain, or disappointment. Your after experience has but confirmed these recollections; convincing you that the memory of none clings to the heart so fondly and so faithfully as that of the dear and well-loved mother.

those who, willing perhaps and ready to attend at the Lord's table, require either to be encouraged by a declaration of the value of so high a privilege, or admonished so to prepare themselves, that they be *meet* partakers thereof. The second applies chiefly, and more pointedly, to such as are negligent to come to the Holy Communion. Each is admirably adapted to its purpose.

THE FIRST EXHORTATION.

Upon giving warning of the Holy Communion.

"Dearly beloved, on Sunday next . . . . . avoiding all scruple and doubtfulness."

On this occasion, the minister, duly impressed with the authority delegated to him as "a steward of the mysteries of God," boldly proclaims the joyful tidings: "I purpose to administer the most comfortable sacrament of the body and blood of Christ." Bearing in mind also that he is proclaiming this to his fellow-servants in the house of God, he addresses them as "dearly beloved:" mingling firmness in the exercise of his office, with affection towards the objects of it. Yet even upon this work and labour of love and honour, he presumes not, save "by God's assistance:" a lowly spirit of dependence upon divine aid pervading alike the Church in all her services, and her ministers in the performance of them. At the same time none can find just ground for pretending that the offer of blessing is too free and general. It is guarded by specifying those to whom it is offered, "even all such as shall be religiously and devoutly disposed;" all such as, rejoicing in the

holy ordinance, bring to the outward act of religion that inward feeling of devotion without which no worship can be blessed. And the warning derives added weight from the heart-stirring truth, that by this holy sacrifice *alone* we obtain remission "of our sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven." With what power does this truth strike upon every heart—"whereby *alone* we obtain remission of our sins." How does it throw off dependence on the world! The rich man no longer glories in his riches, nor the mighty man in his might, nor the wise man in his wisdom, when they severally feel the solemn conviction, that all is vanity, if trusted to for pardon and peace with God. Riches cannot purchase forgiveness; might is powerless to claim reconciliation; wisdom is vain in teaching the way to heaven [1]. The poor and unlearned too should heed and welcome the same truth. Whilst this only Saviour is free to them in their poverty and simplicity, so they are not excused from duty, however poor and unlearned and simple be their state. To them and to all believers, pardon and peace, and hope, are freely offered, through the Redeemer, who hath opened the kingdom of heaven; but it is offered only through his sacrifice. Thankful therefore alike should rich and poor be, that their heavenly Father hath given the Lord Jesus Christ "not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual "food and sustenance in the holy sacrament [2]." That we may

[1] The cross, and the cross alone, can bear our sins, and He alone who died thereon can make us partakers of joy eternal.

[2] Still does the Church preserve her admirable consistency, in thus showing that the grace of God is sought in this ordinance for the sake of *continuing* and *renovating* that spiritual life first vouchsafed in our

receive the gift more worthily, the minister exhorts us "to search and examine our own consciences:" and this self-examination is to be no light survey merely of our general conduct; no concealing some sins from which we will not part, and renouncing others which stand less in the way of our duty to God: *that* would be "after the manner of dissemblers with God:" but there is to be an honest and full confession and rejection of sin; putting our *whole* trust in the merits and righteousness of the Redeemer: for this it is "to come holy and clean in the marriage-garment required by God in holy Scripture [1]."

The address proceeds to particularize a fitting mode of self-examination; and admirable are the rules laid down for this duty. The Church does not presumptuously call upon the penitent to specify to mortal man the sins of which his conscience may be afraid; but earnestly persuades that he lay open his offences and confess himself to Almighty *God*, who searcheth all hearts, and knoweth the most secret thoughts; the confes-

baptism. The commemoration of the sacrifice of the Saviour being "our food and sustenance," it is implied that there already exists a life which requires to be fed and sustained.—See pages 68 and 78.

[1] By the "marriage," or "wedding-garment," is meant the righteousness of Christ! At the spiritual wedding-feast—for so is the Gospel figuratively called—there was "a man which had not on a wedding-garment." He was punished; "cast into outer darkness." This would seem harsh judgment, if the person thus offending had been himself compelled to have purchased a wedding-garment. But the case was far otherwise. The Lord of the feast supplies the wedding-garment to all who come and supplicate the use of it. Therefore it was that punishment overtook the offender. The proper garment was ready to be given. He had only to ask, and to receive; but his heart was not humble enough to wish it, and his lips were too proud to ask it.

sion to be accompanied "with full purpose of amendment of life"—or our confession is vain. But as, from our very infirmities, we sin not only against God, but against our neighbour; of these sins also we must repent: ready to make restitution for injuries done, and to grant forgiveness for injuries received. Where this is not the case, we do but add to our condemnation by partaking of the holy Sacrament. The blasphemer of God, the slanderer of his word, and the hinderer of it; he that either himself speaks evil of the holy Scriptures, or by scorn and contumely, by wit and ridicule, hinders the reception of the word, and checks its influence on men's hearts and conduct; they also who offend against the welfare of their fellow-creatures, whether in public or private life; the adulterer, the malicious, the envious; these all are warned not to approach *until they have repented them* in all sincerity and truth. The warning is an awful one: lest we be like the man described by our blessed Lord, who, freed from an unclean spirit, and having swept and garnished his house, neglects further care of it; ceases to watch; and so lets in other spirits more wicked than the former. It is manifest that the "last state of that man is worse than the first[1]."

Since, however, some there may be whose minds require the aid and sympathy of others, in encouraging them to this searching examination and this holy resolve, the Church exhorts such to seek "the comfort and counsel" of the authorized minister of the Gospel,

[1] Matt. xii. 45. Our reason can understand, that in proportion as any one falls from higher knowledge, from stricter principle, from more conspicuous profession, his fall is the deeper and the more fatal.

that he in his office, being thereto duly appointed, and, as we trust, blessed of Heaven in the execution thereof, "may lead them to a right view of the dispensation of the gospel of grace, as displayed in God's word;" and declare God ever ready to "pardon and absolve all those who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel." How gladly the minister strives thus to instruct and comfort those of his flock, who on these occasions apply to him, every kindly heart can well understand, and duly appreciate.

THE SECOND EXHORTATION[1].

Dearly beloved brethren . . . . . our heavenly Father.

THIS second exhortation is addressed to those who may be negligent in coming to the Holy Communion: and who, though they hear and understand the gracious invitation to that holy feast, first shut their hearts to

[1] The various general arguments enforcing the imperative duty of communion the happy privilege of sharing in the spiritual and heavenly feast—the hope of gaining such blessing as is attached to a due fulfilment of the duty, and a meet exercise of the privilege—the several more stirring motives which may fairly be supposed to operate upon professing Christians, not to throw a shade of doubt over their supposed sincerity by a neglect of their acknowledged duties—these arguments, and the considerations naturally connected with them, have been stated by the writer elsewhere*. In the present little work, his aim is rather to bring out more prominently, and recommend for acceptance, the aid which the Communion Service itself well calculated to give and to confine his reflections chiefly to such particular arguments and illustrations as its several parts so admirably and fully supply.

* In a work entitled "*Christian Watchfulness.*"

the love which vouchsafes it, and then disregard the ministration by which it is conveyed.

The minister opens this exhortation, as the former, with a declaration, that he "intends, by God's grace, to celebrate the Lord's Supper;" and he "bids thereto all the congregation." He strives to win their attention by reminding them, that he pleads "on God's behalf, and for Jesus Christ's sake." What, though his be the voice which conveys the invitation, it is God himself who "lovingly doth call and bid them!" The love which provides the spiritual feast is from heaven—the authority also by which the minister distributes it is from heaven. What a reflection! God, supreme over all, present with his angels in heaven, present with his saints on earth, invites and commands to receive tokens of his love, those very souls whom He might most justly pursue with tokens only of his wrath. Is it possible for any individual to be sensible of the value of his immortal soul, and wilfully to turn away from such an invitation? Nay, as the Church further shows by a reference to the common feelings of mankind in their converse with each other, they who thus turn away, stamp themselves as cold and heartless ingrates. Or is it a grievous wrong and injury, that there lack guests when man hath liberally prepared a rich feast, and not grievous, that when God hath provided his own rich spiritual feast, "they who are called, most unthankfully, without any cause, refuse to come?" Judge yourself, O my reader! Have you *cause* for withdrawing yourself from that holy Supper? And what *is* that cause? Does it satisfy your *conscience now?* will it, think you—and here, listen to the dictates of your own heart—will it satisfy your *God*,

hereafter? In this address two causes are supposed —worldliness, and conscious sin. The first, you *know*, cannot be admitted as a reasonable excuse, even by yourself. You, being capable of immortality, cannot reasonably put this world in competition with the next, or set up worldly advantages, which must end, against spiritual advantages, which will know no end. And as for sin being the bar between you and the table of the Lord, are we not all sinners? yet we are all called. Take heed lest the case be not thus—that you will *not part from* the sin of which you are conscious; and *therefore* you dare not come. It is because the soul of the penitent is conscious of sin, that he hears and welcomes the invitation to the Table of his Lord. He struggles against his sin; he longs to conquer and cast it off; to be victorious over evil, and gain strength for a holy and amended life. Are you keeping away, that you may cherish your sin, and rest in fancied security? Alas! alas! you are speaking peace where there is no peace. Sin lieth at the door; and whether you reject or partake of the holy feast prepared, you are working your own condemnation, so long as you continue in wilful sin. Either way you are in peril. Again—are you preparing your soul, yet plead that you are not ready? Heed the plain counsel of the Church: she speaks with the voice of a friend; bold as faithful—"*How will such feigned excuses avail before God?*" The minister then, in the spirit and with the reasoning of St. Paul, pleads at once with you all—and for you all—pleads for the honour of his heavenly Lord, pleads for the welfare of your immortal souls. He "bids you in the name of God;" he "calls you in Christ's behalf;" he "ex-

horts you, as you love your own salvation, that ye will be partakers of this Holy Communion." His very language breathes the deep and earnest affection of the Apostle, when he prays the Corinthians, "in Christ's stead, that they be reconciled to God[1]." Or shall the Son of God have "yielded up his soul unto death" on the cross for your salvation, and you in all the proud meanness of ingratitude, scorn the appointed mode of proving your remembrance of that sacrifice, though it was a sacrifice made for you? Is your heart untouched by his pathetic appeal, in his dying hour, "Do this in remembrance of me?" Would you anxiously and scrupulously fulfil to the very letter the least wish expressed by a dying relative or friend, or even neighbour, yet will you hold as nought the gracious request of a dying Saviour! Forbid it, shame and honour, and gratitude! Nay, forbid it self-love! For if *He* be not our Saviour, alas! the truth—salvation is not ours. Well then does the Church implore you, if not a communicant, to consider "how great injury you do unto God, and how sore punishment hangeth over your head for the same; when you *wilfully*[2] abstain from the Lord's table, and separate from

[1] 2 Cor. v. 20. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

[2] In proportion as the Church, zealous for the honour of its founder and Lord, and earnest for the welfare of her children, urges upon them all, the duty of communicating; so, full of love and charity towards them, she guards her warnings by showing that they apply not to those who are *unwillingly* absent from the table of the Lord. It is against willing and habitual absence from so high and imperative a duty, that she raises her warning voice, affectionately as earnestly, for the soul's welfare; and fearlessly, as becometh those who must give account.

your brethren who come to feed on the banquet of that most heavenly food." It does indeed but require earnest consideration—as the close of this address charitably and wisely points out—for the reckless contemner of the Sacrament, to return by God's grace to a better mind. The welfare of his immortal soul is concerned in his amendment. And here, as the minister hopes that you, and the rest of his flock, ever offer up your prayers for *him*, so he pledges himself to "make *his* humble petition unto Almighty God" for *you*. And this he does hopefully. God is a God of love and mercy, and who shall doubt that He of whom the promise is, "will graciously hear and answer prayer" when offered in the name of Jesus; will hear us now; and when the united supplications of minister and people, for mutual blessing, ascend to the throne of grace, will answer them in peace? May He answer them, my reader, to thee, and to me!

EXHORTATION TO THE ASSEMBLED COMMUNICANTS.

"Dearly beloved in the Lord . . . all the days of our life."

THE effect of the two preceding exhortations, which gave notice of the celebration of the Sacrament, having been that a congregation are assembled to partake of that holy feast, the Church, with a laudable anxiety for their welfare, exhorts them so assembled to offer a consistent worship; sincere and solemn: for "as the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy Sacrament;" "so is the danger great, if we receive the same unworthily."

The benefit is indeed great; "for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; then, we dwell in Christ and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us[1]." The danger also is great; lest we be "guilty of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour, eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's body;" and, "kindling God's wrath against us" by our solemn mockery, "provoke Him to plague us with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death." Hence St. Paul's exhortation to communicants is held up for their solemn consideration, lest they approach the table inconsiderately, and partake presumptuously, and neglect that diligent examination of themselves, which the Apostle so strenuously urges[2]. Bid to "judge ourselves," we are encouraged thereto by the hope, that, convinced of the danger of sin upon our own judgment of ourselves, we shall renounce it; turn from sin to the Saviour, and so be *not* judged of the Lord. Mark the caution with which our Church avoids the arrogance of herself sitting in judgment upon the state of her people. The priest judgeth not

[1] Strong as these terms are, they are but the transcript of our blessed Saviour's expression of love and union with his faithful followers, and recorded in his tender and heart-stirring prayer on behalf of the disciples from whom He was about to be separated. John xvii. 11. 21. O! then, thou humble communicant, fear not but that the spirit of Christ shall be with your spirit, in holiness, and peace, and joy. Your mind will be as the mind of Christ, set to do the will of your Father in heaven your love as your Redeemer's love, loving your neighbour as yourself, and your God above all things—your joy will be to take up your cross and follow Him. God Almighty grant, that your glory also may be as his, a crown of glory which fadeth not away! But remember—whoso would be one with Him in glory, must first be one with Him in holiness.

[2] 1 Cor. xi. 28.

his fellow-sinners. He is but a servant with them of the same Lord, a steward in the same household of God, and a dispenser of the mysteries thereof. He therefore leaves all judgment to the conscience of the individual worshippers in this the more immediate presence of God. Any attempt to deceive that Being must be vain. No secret of the heart so deep, but He shall fathom it[1]. And is it not wisdom to set about the work? To repent us truly "for our sins past" —what peace of mind does such repentance bring! what a weight of misery is removed from the heart! Whenever you have cast away envy, hatred, malice, uncharitableness, before men; pride, discontent, neglect, irreligion before God—say, have you not experienced a relief which is as though a heavy weight had been removed? have you not enjoyed an elasticity of spirits which they only know who by having resolutely cast off the cords of sin, fear not, under the shadow of their Saviour's wing, to approach even to the mercy-seat? Stedfastly purposing to lead a new life, you are resolute in pursuing not only things of this world, but those of the next. Heaven is now your aim. Yet without a new, that is a holy life, you well know, there is no heaven for any of us. Take care also that you "have a *lively* faith in God's mercy through Christ." There is such a misery as a "dead faith"—a faith like unto a dead body, which the soul has left, and the limbs of which no longer fulfil their office. Faith, to benefit you, must show itself alive by active holiness, in token that you are really Christ's. To this self-examination you must feel yourself aroused by the very ordinance to

[1] See page 268.

which you are invited. At least your heart cannot be so cold, as that it remains unmoved, when all around tells of the mercies of redemption purchased for you by the death and passion of Him, who bids you partake, that you may remember Him. Would you forget Him! Would you slight the *command*; if you so view it? or would you reject the *invitation*; if so you prefer to consider the injunction? You surely cannot but own, though perhaps reluctantly, that you really "have a thankful remembrance of his death." Let us hope that such is your state of mind. Your triumph over yourself brings peace even in this world; for he who is at peace with God through the Saviour, is at peace with his fellow-creatures also. You, therefore, are "in perfect love and charity with all men." Is it nothing to get rid of all that load of heart-racking torment?—nothing, that so you may now look "to be a *meet* partaker of these holy mysteries[1]?" You are of too honest a heart to partake, unprepared and unmeet. You would not so mock God. Rather, with your whole soul, you give most humble and hearty thanks to the three persons of the glorious Trinity—God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—engaged in "the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and man." What bounds can be set to our amazement! What

[1] By a meet partaker, you will understand not a faultless being; for then you need not approach the Table. "I came to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance," is the declared object of the Saviour himself. You will therefore understand *him* to be a *meet* partaker, who approaches meekly as a penitent; truly sorry for his sins past, resolved by God's grace to avoid sin for the time to come, and heartily thankful to that mercy which has provided a remedy for sin, in Jesus Christ his Redeemer.

wondrous love for fallen man! What wisdom to plan; What power to accomplish; what mercy to perfect such a redemption! Jesus perfected it, as God and man. Behold and wonder at the means! Behold this divine and gracious Being, humbling himself even to the death upon the cross; there lowering himself to receive the bitter scoffs and cruel mockings of his maddened foes, gnashing upon Him with their teeth, and taunting Him with the sufferings, which yet saved *you*. Was it not for "us, miserable sinners," that He died[1]? for us, who, without Him, must have lain in the darkness of ignorance and hopelessness, and under the withering misery of the shadow of death! And *why* thus died He for us, but "that he might make us the children of God, and exalt us unto everlasting life." You are not one ungratefully to forget a friend who has done you a kindness. "No"—you reply, "God forbid, that I be so base!" Yet it is in human nature to forget benefits, especially spiritual benefits. He therefore, who in his own person conferred this benefit, hath compassionately, in reference to our infirmities, himself also enjoined a specific and striking mode whereby we may keep it in remembrance. And who of us would willingly forget "the exceeding great love of our master and only Saviour Jesus Christ thus dying for us?" Who would be forgetful of "the innumerable benefits which by his blood-shedding He

[1] Rom. v. 8. Do not think this harsh as applied to you. You and I, and we all have confessed that we *are* "miserable sinners"—that "there is *no health* in us." See the confession in the opening of the Morning Service. See also the Litany. I am sure, that however good and upright you feel towards your fellow-creatures, you do not, for one moment, pretend to stand justified before your God.

hath obtained unto us?"—With what condescension then hath this glorious Being humbled himself to appoint a means of remembering Him! Humility itself could stoop no lower! But shall Jesus Christ, God and man, thus stoop to us and our infirmities, and we be backward to be admitted to Him and his perfections? O! neither turn away from this holy sacrament, nor come unmeet! Come, rejoicing to be admitted to those holy mysteries He hath instituted and ordained; come, receiving them gladly as pledges of his love, and viewing them as a continual remembrance of his death; not as if you were engaging in some hard cheerless duty, but as welcoming an ordinance, replete with promise of blessing here and hereafter. So shall you come "to your great and endless comfort." The concluding sentence of this address—brief, but emphatic—is the noble and generous outpouring of a soul, overflowing with reverence, love, and gratitude; resolved to honour, and unreservedly obey, the bidding of so good and gracious a Redeemer. "To Him therefore, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, let us give, as we are most bounden, *continual* thanks; submitting ourselves *wholly* to his holy will and pleasure, and studying to serve Him in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life." Let it be your delight thus to render thanks, where your heart tells you they are so justly due; and as you have had sufficient experience of your own wayward will to know how miserable are its ways, be wise enough to submit to *his:* watching every opportunity of showing that you obey Him as his servant, and honour Him as your Lord; and studying thus to bear yourself before Him all the days of your life; but specially *now*, when He

calls you and us all to his holy Sacrament, for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls, and the renewing our holy covenant of mercy and of peace, to our great and endless comfort.

CHAPTER XXX.

ADDRESS TO THOSE WHO COME TO THE HOLY COMMUNION.

"Ye that do truly and earnestly repent."

STILL blending the voice of warning with encouragement, and watching the portals of the sanctuary with equal anxiety for the honour of God and the welfare of man; careful, as far as in her lieth, that neither the unmeet worshipper enter therein, nor the lowly and contrite turn away — the Church yet once again declares who they are, to whom she offers the holy Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, and what she requires of them who embrace the offer. They, whom she invites and encourages, are not the mere formal professors of the Gospel, who would fain make a compromise with their God and their conscience, and come with an acknowledgment of some sins and a reservation of others: but they are those who *truly* and *earnestly* repent; who set about the work, not like men who would conceal from themselves or their God, any sin of which conscience makes them afraid, but like wise men, sincere and resolute in putting it away, and overcoming it; earnest, as those may well be supposed to be, who under a salutary conviction that without repentance there is no pardon, and without

pardon no reconciliation, and without reconciliation, no peace in life, no hope in death—feel their all to be at stake, and find no rest till they have gained the one thing needful.

Again—those whom she calls are not they who hide a spirit of enmity towards their neighbour, under the specious mask of indifference, and so consider themselves meet to appear before the blessed Master of this heavenly feast; but they who "are in love and charity with their neighbours;" they, who if aught of ill hath arisen amid the jarrings of a selfish world, have "overcome evil with good;" have resolved upon love and good-will, ere they approach the table of that Lord, who, himself Love, did die to prove his love to fallen man, his mercy to sinners, and his divine compassion towards all men. In the hearts of *these* reigns the charity which St. Paul taught, and the Saviour exemplified. True, they are not permitted to confound the distinction between right and wrong! With St. Paul, they "rejoice *not* in *iniquity*, *but* in the *truth*;" they palliate not the sinfulness of sin, but uphold virtue in its integrity, and righteousness in its purity; yet have they so learned to forgive an enemy and forget an injury, that enmity finds no room in their heart. Love and charity alone gain entrance there. Further; *they* are called, who thus "truly and earnestly repenting of their sins before God," and actuated by a pervading spirit of "love and charity towards their neighbour," really do "intend to lead a new life." Not lured by those false views of God's pardoning mercy, which would lead to the presumption of "sinning that grace may abound," and having sought pardon for sin one hour, of rushing again into sin the

next—they with honesty of purpose set about a new life, and, *habitually* correcting those errors of which they in their seasons of *devotion professed* an abhorrence, make it their study and delight to "follow the commandments of God in sincerity," and obeying the godly motions of the Spirit for which they pray, are fixed and careful "to walk from henceforth in his holy ways;" as far as lieth in them, unblameably.

These are they whom the Church calls. If any, hearing that call, come *not* truly contrite; *not* earnestly penitent; *not* in love and charity with their neighbours; *not* intending to lead a new life; neither careful to "follow the commandments of God, nor to walk from henceforth "in his holy ways"—if any hearing the terms of the invitation to blessing, come with expectation of receiving the blessing without compliance with the terms, they deceive their own souls, but they weaken not the authority of the Church of Christ; they weaken not the benefit of her ordinances; they weaken not the faith of the meet communicant. The sin is their own. The Church is not to be held responsible for their daring. The meek and prepared heart is not to be deterred from its privilege. Peter was raised from his fall, his brethren were sustained in their strength, and the ordinance was enjoined and blessed of its Founder, even though the betrayer shared with them the holy supper of the Lord.

Draw ye near then with *faith*. By faith, calm the natural fear of your own awakened conscience. Ye believe in God; believe his word. "What if our heart condemn us? God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." His grace conquers at once sin, and the fears which under a sense of its danger

would tempt us from reliance on his promises, and from hope in his mercy. By faith, as with a shield, turn aside the subtle attacks of the wicked who would fain withdraw you from a Saviour even by your own fears, and who, because after all you must be to Him an unworthy and "unprofitable servant," would entice you from his service altogether, and, under the plea of humility, debase you to an unbeliever. By faith, therefore, nerve your heart with the assured word that the "blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin; and that whosoever trusteth in him shall never be confounded." By faith, cheer your soul amid all its heavy discouragements, all its dark sorrows, all its secret misgivings. Remember "the glories which shall be revealed," and which await you and every faithful servant of God: glories prepared by your ascended Saviour[1], and by Him secured and sealed for you, by that very sacrifice, "to commemorate which you are now assembled." By faith then take this holy Sacrament "to your comfort."

Before, however, you can derive comfort from this act of faith, you must disburden your mind of the weight of sin, by a hearty acknowledgment of your sorrow for it, an unreserved confession of its misery and guilt, and an assurance of your firm resolve to amend your life according to God's word. Moreover, that such expression of contrition may the more clearly indicate your deep sense of utter unworthiness, make this "humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees"—not shaming to confess before men, *Him*, who, as you devoutly hope and pray, will one day confess you before the angels in heaven.

[1] John xiv. 2, 3. "I go to prepare a place for you;" "that where *I* am, there *ye* may be also."

GENERAL CONFESSION,

To be said in the name of all *those that are minded to receive the Holy Communion* [1].

"Almighty God . . through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

THE fulness and truly scriptural character of this confession well justifies the Church in directing it to be said in the name of *all* the communicants. None so righteous that they can hope to stand justified otherwise than by the atonement of the Redeemer; none so unrighteous but that the way of holiness is open to them, through the same all-powerful mediation. The convinced sinner finds here adequate expression for all his sense of misery and compunction; for his hatred of past evil, and his eager resolve to lead a new and better life; whilst the best and the holiest of the servants of Christ readily adopt every sentiment of lowliness and unworthiness, which may befit imperfect creatures. They think no language too humbling, as they feel no sorrow can be too deep, when they approach a God, who is "Almighty; Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men!"

The address declares God to be "*Almighty.*" Hence, we might with good reason shrink from laying open to Him our hearts, filled as they are too often with worldly and unworthy, if not unholy thoughts. But fear yields to trust, when we consider Him also, as

[1] The Rubric farther directs, that each individual *declare* his confession: for the form is to be repeated by "all the people *kneeling* and *saying*."

"the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." We trust that since we are called by his Son's name, and baptized unto a lively hope of our calling and election in Him, He may be pleased to exercise, not his power in punishing, but his mercy in saving. Thus only dare we approach Him, our "maker and our judge." For not only the wicked and the worldly stand in awe, when they look forward to a future judgment. God is the "judge of *all* men." Hence it is no strange thing, that the hearts even of the righteous are filled with solemn dread at the prospect of that awful day of the Lord. The righteous indeed are they who best know how far man must ever come short of that perfection, so plainly insisted upon in the Gospel[1], and in which perfection of righteousness, either their own or imputed, we must stand before God. The inquiring language of David, therefore, well becomes us all—"Lord, who may stand in thy sight?"

This address is followed by an *acknowledgment* of sin, by a declaration of repentance, and by an expression of faith in God's mercy through Christ. The communicants "acknowledge and bewail their manifold sins and wickedness, which they have from time to time most grievously committed, by thought, word, and deed, against his Divine majesty; provoking most justly his wrath and indignation against them." In this solemn hour of reflection, many an offence rises up to memory, long dormant[2]. The word read and

[1] Matt. v. 8. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

[2] Of the past, every reader well knows, how much may recur to the mind in a moment of time. It is inconceivable the rapidity with which thought succeeds to thought, when once the springs of memory

preached, the spirit in answer to prayer, and conscience so aroused, combine to detect the lurking sin, even though it be but in thought; and presenting it in its true character, as most justly provoking the Divine wrath, they cause the offender to mourn, and, haply, to forsake it. How can it be but that "the remembrance of those sins is grievous;" committed perhaps against strong convictions of heart, against a sense of mercies vouchsafed, and punishment forborne? How can "the burden of them be otherwise than intolerable?" There is no rest under their galling weight. Food does not nourish, sleep does not refresh, devotion itself supplies no comfort. That which cheers the pardoned, mocks the sinful; and all which is

are opened. Therefore it is emphatically said of the wicked, who "hate to be reformed" and who *cherish* their sins; that they "*keep up* for themselves wrath against the day of wrath." They accumulate sins, as a debtor his responsibilities, with a rapidity of which sad experience alone can fully know the weight and misery.

As this sheet was passing through the press, I met with a treatise upon the physiology of death, in which the writer records the following fact; and as it is not only in itself very striking, but is powerfully illustrative of the view here taken of the subject, I venture to present it to the reader's serious consideration. "A phenomenon has come to my knowledge," he observes, "which I do not recollect to have seen noticed. A man fell into the water; he rose several times to the surface. He had a perfect consciousness of the hopelessness of his situation. With this conviction on his mind, he saw presented to him a picture of his past life. The minutest action in which he had been engaged was brought in a kind of *tableau* before him. Circumstances that had long been forgotten were conjured from his brain, and he had a bird's-eye view of his past life." The writer adds the following startling and instructive suggestion: "Possibly this may occur to *every person* at the moment of *dying* *."

Reader! would you that such picture present to you sins forgotten and unrepented, or sins mourned and pardoned!

* Winslow upon the Physiology of Death.

bright to the reconciled, is dark to the alien from his God. O! glorious truth then! Thou, O blessed Jesus! Thou removest that grievous remembrance! Thou bearest that burden, too heavy for ourselves to bear! Mercy therefore is all our plea! Mercy through Thee! For *thy* sake we implore to be forgiven! we avow that if mercy be extended to us, it must be through thine atoning sacrifice; in Thee alone is our whole trust, that the Father will "forgive us all that is past," and by his preventing grace, will "grant us" ever hereafter to serve and please Him *in newness* of life. For the future, then, let our constant aim be, to avoid those paths which led us wrong, and choose the new and safe path, which hitherto we have either despised or disregarded. O! the peace of mind which follows this "newness of life!" this happy resolve to serve and please God! Henceforth we shall not, as of old, be afraid to think of a present God. We have no longer any secret cherished sin in the heart which makes us afraid to acknowledge his omniscience. We no longer live as if we would escape his pervading knowledge. Our joy is to feel his presence. Ours is the Psalmist's happy prayer, "Try me, O God, and examine my heart; see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Thus living to our own peace, we shall also live "to the honour and glory of his name;" for it shall to all men be evident, that the renovation is of the Lord; the fruit of his word; the work of his Spirit; "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

What an animating object is here presented to our contemplation—a renovated soul! Formerly there had been bitter, though concealed, shame; deep

sorrow, keen self-reproach, and all those complicated feelings, which sin gathers round the impenitent. Now, there is shame indeed; but the feeling is avowed, and its bitterness is past; there is sorrow, but it is a sorrow working joy; there is self-condemnation, but the soul hath cast itself upon God who "is greater than our heart." What, though conviction once lowered us prostrate in the dust! The throne of grace did but shine yet more glorious, the lower the penitent did bow himself. Penitence hath raised and set him up on a rock; and new emotions, soothing though humbling, have succeeded all those sad troublings. He rises from his dark memories of despair, firm of purpose and of will, looking back upon the past, as one remembers the dangers of death escaped. Even those, whose course of life has been held in a uniform endeavour after Christian faith and Christian practice, and who therefore might seem to "need no" *such* "repentance," adopt this confession in all humility of spirit; and it brings peace to them. Every devout feeling becomes deeper and holier, as they can cast from them the imperfections which attach even to their holiest services. The soul is elevated above its wonted bearing; the weight of the cross is then felt light burden; the yoke of the gospel, then easy.

THE ABSOLUTION.

"Almighty God . . . through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Our Church, having received in the confession of the congregation an avowal of that repentance which the

Saviour himself made the condition of forgiveness and reconciliation—"*Repent*, and be *saved*"—fearlessly declares, in the exercise of her delegated authority, God's pardon and love[1]. But it is impossible for language to be more guarded and unpresuming. The form itself partakes the twofold character of an ardent supplication, and a declaratory pardon. In either case it is so framed, that the expectation of blessing is grounded altogether upon the gracious and merciful *promise* of our heavenly Father, that He will forgive the sins of all who heartily repent, and truly believe. And is it not *this* truth, which the Saviour came down from heaven to establish, which angels heralded, and which Apostles proclaimed?

Our Church here arrogates no exclusive favour, even to the assembled congregation. She declares the offer of the promise with the conditions of it to be *universal:* "Almighty God hath promised forgiveness of sins to *all* them that, with hearty repentance and true faith, turn unto Him"—yet she cannot but point the absolution to the individuals assembled at that holy feast, of which, as they have professed to heed the conditions, she ardently trusts they may share the blessings—"Have mercy upon *you*," "pardon and deliver *you*." How must every heart fill with a calm and holy joy when these words of peace strike upon it! How readily must *yours* respond—"O God, who in thine

[1] "To us," saith St. Paul, "God hath given the ministry of reconciliation." And justly does the Apostle claim this happy office: for "whosesoever sins ye remit," saith the risen Saviour to his appointed ministers, "they are remitted." And to whom are they to offer God's pardon in the remission of sins, but to those who repent and turn to Him? 2 Cor. v. 18. and John xx. 23.

omniscience knowest that I do truly repent, and that I have confessed unreservedly my offences, keeping nothing back; O heavenly Father, remember thine own holy promise to forgive the sins of the penitent: forgive *me mine*, and blot out all *my* transgressions. My soul turneth trustingly to Thee, with hearty repentance and true faith. O turn Thou mercifully unto me with pardon and deliverance."....Mark how instructive the words are. May God not only "pardon" past sins, but "deliver" the penitent from the power of them in the time to come, and *that fully*. He who would confess his sins acceptably before God, must do so without any the least mental reservation. When he implores pardon and deliverance, the supplication has reference to *all* his sins. There must be no keeping back any favourite sin, no self-deceiving in the neglect of any distasteful duty. *All* sin is to be removed, *all* goodness cherished. You therefore continue your heartfelt prayer, that, by his grace, sought specially in this solemn service, you may be "confirmed and strengthened in all goodness:" so confirmed in what is strong, so strengthened in what is weak, that you may neither be discouraged by the dangers of your christian course, nor wearied by its toil; but be so guided by divine grace, and sustained by divine power, that you be brought "at last to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE SENTENCES OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

STILL there may be timid souls who, under an awful sense of sin itself, and a deep conviction of their own

utter unworthiness as sinners, even yet fear to approach the table of the Lord. Therefore our Church again evidences its consideration and sympathy with the lowly and the contrite; again enters, as it were, into all our feelings, again compassionates all our failings, and leads us on, by her cheering voice, as a tender mother her children. First she declares what *comfortable* words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to Him: "Come unto me *all* ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." And are not these words full of comfort? Are they not ample warrant for the encouragement hitherto given by the Church, for a trust in the Divine mercy? Are they not a seal to the testimony she has hitherto borne to the Saviour's power and will to save the penitent? or has she exceeded her office? Have her ministers gone beyond their credentials as ambassadors of Christ? Rather, would they not themselves be chargeable with keeping back the full offer of divine mercy, did they not invite *all* to accept the blessing? And of this we are well assured, that there lives not the christian pilgrim upon whom the words must not fall, like balm upon an aching wound; for there lives not one upon whom care and sorrow, temporal or spiritual, sit so light, but that he needs rest, and longs after repose. Of the assembled congregation there are none whom trouble reaches not at some or other season. Safety for the present is no security for the future. If free to-day, we may bear our burden to-morrow. Even suppose greater trials to be escaped altogether, the tender oft have sorrows which fill the heart with sadness, though sorrows of which the world knows not; and it is surely wise to provide a strength

which shall meet every case. Hence, this gracious invitation and its promise shine like the rainbow light, giving hope that in storm as in calm, in sorrow as in joy, our ever-present God is with us. Moreover, to every well-constituted mind, there is always grief, deep though salutary grief, known only to itself and God, when, after hearty self-examination, it mourns its own unworthiness, and trembles in the prospect of a dread hereafter. To such these words breathe full comfort. "Come to me," saith the *omnipotent* Saviour and Redeemer, "Come to *me*, and I will give you rest;" rest even from thy fears. Come to my cross, and there, weary with thy pilgrimage, lay thy burden, where it may be better borne than by thee [1]." Nor let any doubt this power and love. What saith St. John? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that ALL that believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Lingereth yet some contrite penitent? Hear also

[1] This reliance on our blessed Saviour for strength to bear the weight of our cross, and for spirit to endure its pains, implies a submission to the will of God, which is not less pleasing to Him, than beneficial to ourselves. "Whoever always reposes in the good and holy will of God"—said the apostolic Swartz, "saves himself much trouble, and makes that supportable which an impatient and unsubdued self-will would render intolerable." This noble-minded servant of Christ proceeds to attribute all success to Him, into whose name we were baptized as Christian soldiers; and beautifully he reminds us, that from the very cross we bear, and whose weight lades us so heavily, is reflected the strength by which it is to be borne, and the courage by which it is to be borne triumphantly. "May the Lord," he adds, "May the Lord subdue in us this self-will, more and more, by the *power* of the *cross* of Christ."—"*Swartz's Life*," by Dean Pearson, vol. i. p. 76, 3rd ed.

what St. Paul saith: "This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*." "If *any man* sin," saith St. John, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." Well is the Church justified by these scriptures in encouraging the congregation present that they "lift up their hearts;" and fearlessly may the people respond, in the firm language of faith, "We lift them up unto the Lord." Things of this world for a season laid aside, the soul rises in its views from earth to heaven; from the fear of man, to the love of God. How naturally does our service here turn to thanksgiving! How readily does the full heart acknowledge the just claim which God has to our gratitude! "Let us give thanks unto our Lord God," is the call of a grateful Church to her assembled people—"It is meet and right so to do," is their concurrent response.

Your minister takes up the appropriate words of acknowledgment and amplifies them; showing the extent of the acknowledgment they convey, and the grounds of it. He declares that this thanksgiving to our "Lord, holy Father, Almighty, everlasting God," is a duty for "all times and all places." It is a duty for all *times*: for youth, for age; for health, for sickness; for riches, for poverty; for tribulation and for joy. Who has led us through the helpless years of infancy to the strength and joyousness of youth? Who has brought us through youth and manhood to our age? Who preserves us in health, or restores us from sickness? Who sanctifieth riches? Who giveth contentment in poverty? In adversity who comfort-

eth? And to whom owe we the bright hours of joy which sometimes shine upon our pilgrim path; but to the fountain of all comfort, the refuge from all sorrow, even our God? And as at all *times* it is meet and right to give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, so is this thanksgiving due in all *places:* at home and abroad; in the hour of quiet, and the season of business; in the recesses of our heart, and specially in thine own holy house, O God, where Thou choosest to dwell. Now, therefore, in this, the assembly of thy saints on earth, we join with the holy worshippers above—even "with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven"—in giving thanks to Thee: "we laud and magnify thy glorious name." We praise thee evermore, as the everlasting Trinity in Unity. Ours, too, be the angels' song: "Holy, holy, holy," Father, Son, and Spirit, One "Lord God of hosts;" as "heaven is full of thy glory," so let the earth share that fulness. "Glory be to thee, O Lord, most high!"

What a sustaining and happy thought, that we mortals are permitted thus to join upon earth the services of angels in heaven! Yet when is it that we have not this high privilege? At all times, and in all places, it is ours; not, indeed, by unceasing hallelujahs—mortal infirmities forbid immortal strains—but we humbly, and let us trust acceptably through Christ, share the work of angels, when we do our Father's will on earth, even *as they do it in heaven*[1].

[1] Matt. v. 16. Archbishop Leighton, when speaking of a truly christian, or "*angelical*" life, as he terms it—calls it "a life spent between ascending in prayer to fetch blessings from above, and descending to scatter them among men:" teaching us that the spirit of heavenly-mindedness may pervade our active duties, as fully as they stamp our seasons of devotion.

CHAPTER XXX.

PROPER PREFACES.

PROPER PREFACE FOR CHRISTMAS DAY.

"Because Thou didst give Jesus Christ," &c.

EVERY thinking mind must acknowledge the *additional* force which our duties and enjoyments, and all events of pleasure or of pain, derive from the association of time, place, and circumstance[1]. Hence, for

[1] This power of association is at some time or other acknowledged and acted upon by us all. Do we not in our social and family circles observe the marked events of life, either in joy or sorrow, with special notice! The annual recurrence of a birth-day to parent or child or friend, how does it gladden all within its influence! The morning is hailed with brighter welcome, and added gratitude is felt to the great Disposer of all, who has spared for added life the loved one—relative or friend; and our hearts overflow with tender wishes for many a return of the festal day! And, alas! where are they whose hearts soften not, as some day of mourning returns in its yearly course; the return of which is saddened by the loss of the loved and honoured! The image of the dead springs up to memory as in days gone by, and the voice of love or duty, counsel or comfort, again seems to be heard, as when these now dead were present in all the flush of life. True it is, that as the stream of time flows on, and bears survivors nearer and more near to a reunion with the saints above, where no death shall again sever them, the Christian finds not only a holy calm in submitting to the Divine will, but a strengthening, and a soothing, and even a joy in these sacred memories, these holy communings with the dead. As the past is made present, and the object of our contemplations on the several occasions of joy or sorrow, is to prepare us for the future; this world is no longer our main object. It is not indeed held as nought; for *that* would be wrong. It is held at its proper value; neither worthless—for upon a right use of its opportunities depends our welfare in eternity: nor of such worth, as to be put in competition with our hereafter—for the one is passing, the other enduring. But who of us has not often felt, when, during the season of mourning, the soul has been carried with tender recollections toward those gone before us to the world of spirits, the mind fixed

those seasons which are marked as more important eras in the Christian year, appropriate prefaces are prepared; stamping the return of each with its own proper and peculiar force. Our attention is naturally first directed to that which, of course, stands forth conspicuously to a Christian's view,—the season of our blessed Lord's nativity; when He came in the likeness of man, and dwelt among us, God manifest in the flesh [1], that He might be our sacrifice for sin, and heal all our infirmities. But the Being, who is to cleanse from sin the polluted soul of fallen man, must be Himself sinless. Such was the Saviour Christ. Though the seed of the woman, He was without spot of sin,

in contemplation of what may haply now be their holy happy occupation; what, their calm victorious rest; what, their bright undying joys; who has not then felt a triumph over the world, unknown before! We have been enabled to conquer its fears, to rise above its hopes; and by recalling past hours of unworldliness, when we watched their dying moments, and felt for ourselves strength and refuge and comfort in our God, we have had our conversation in heaven.

Hence, too, the Church notices by special services, not only the more solemn seasons in our blessed Saviour's life, but likewise those days upon which we commemorate the more eminent of his faithful followers, cherish their memory, and strive to imitate the virtues we admire. Nor can it be otherwise than conducive, we trust, to God's glory, that when "the holy Church universal throughout all the world" doth in her daily Service acknowledge her faith and hope in Him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—our faith is quickened, and our hope brightened by the animating examples of a successful warfare in those righteous dead, with whose memory is associated whatever is great and lovely, tender and brave, unshrinking and enduring; and whilst we contemplate the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, and the noble army of Martyrs, so follow their steps, that if haply we be called to partake their trial, we may, through Christ, imitate their courage, share their fortitude, and finally be partakers also of their crown.

[1] See page 137.

and of heavenly purity; because the Son of Man, born of the Virgin Mary, was also the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Ghost. This mystery we celebrate with marked joy, when the blessed day returns on which we commemorate his birth. The mystery was foretold of an angel; and as it was foretold, so was it accomplished. Pure and spotless from sin was the Saviour born!—pure and spotless did He die. Well may we rejoice in the strength of our salvation! Hence, each returning season of our Lord's nativity is joyfully hailed through this Christian land; in every neighbourhood, in every family, in every heart, it is a high and glorious festival; calling forth and cherishing all the sweet charities of life; exciting us to gladden all within our influence, and so welcome the day which brings to light life and immortality. Yet this joy where shines brightest, even in the soul of the individual who, bending lowly at the table of his Lord, listens with glad ear to the full consolation conveyed in the truth proclaimed near to Bethlehem, "Lo, this day is born, in the city of David, a Saviour, Christ the Lord." By the power of his blood-shedding He is able and willing, O penitent soul, to wash thee, and every mourning sinner, clean from all sin; enabling thee to join hopefully with the ardent acclaim of angels and archangels in their song, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will toward men."

PREFACE FOR EASTER DAY.

"But chiefly are we bound . . . . . to everlasting life."

Our Lord Himself, however, considered that the evidence of his Messiahship would have been incomplete

if he had not risen again from the dead according to his own sure word of prophecy. Accordingly, He foretold that event, both figuratively and literally; and with a regard to time and circumstance so minute, that its accomplishment, in all the particulars foretold, stamps the whole as *from* and *of* God. Early in his ministry he foreshadowed the event, clothing it, however, in figurative language; "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up:" but "he spake of the temple of his body;" adds the sacred historian[1]. Later in his ministry, and as the event approached its accomplishment, He foretold it in the plainest possible terms; in terms so plain, that even his enemies, the Pharisees, understood Him to speak literally, and to foretel a resurrection of the very body in which He should die; for, upon his crucifixion, in their urgent request to Pilate that a watch should be set over the dead body, they argued the reasonableness of their jealous care from his own declaration, that He would "rise again." "Sir," said they, "we remember that that deceiver *said*, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again[2]." And surely such had been his declaration, accompanied with every particular of the sufferings and manner of death which should lead to it. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the Chief Priests and unto the Scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and *the third day he shall rise again*[3]." He *did* "rise again from the dead," *as*, and *when* he had said; and by his resur-

[1] John ii. 19—21. [2] Matt. xxvii. 63. [3] Matt. xx. 18, 19.

rection proved Himself the conqueror over sin and death; vanquishing the grave for *us* as well as for Himself; being the first-fruits of them that sleep. We now know "that he is the very paschal Lamb which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world." "By his death hath he destroyed death?" "by his rising to life again"—most glorious proof as it is, that He *so* completed the work of redemption as to satisfy his Father's wrath, and win again his favour—" he hath restored to *us* everlasting life." How blissful this truth! how full of joy unutterable! joy felt in our inmost hearts, though no tongue can give adequate expression to it. Our bodies, to dust though they may have returned, shall be again living, sentient, and even glorious bodies, like to his. Death they shall know no more; no, nor sin, nor sorrow. Heaven will be gained. Rest with saints and angels will there await those faithful unto death. There we shall see God face to face. And all this will be shared with the righteous of every age and degree; with dear friends and relatives long separated by death; friends now deeply mourned or mourning. Fear and doubt are for ever cast away. Jesus is risen — his power, supreme; Himself, the Lord alike of death as of life. Justly, therefore, does the Church remind us, that "chiefly are we bound to praise God for the glorious resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Can we own this duty of thanksgiving, and forbear the duty of obedience!

PREFACE FOR ASCENSION DAY.

Through thy most . . . . . reign with Him in glory.

WHAT if Jesus Christ be risen for our justification! What if He thereby hath accomplished our reconciliation with the Father? Do we not daily risk its forfeiture? daily offend again? And how are we daily to be renewed as sons of God, but through Him who daily intercedes for us? and who, that he might plead on our behalf continually, "hath ascended up where he was before, and, seated at the right hand of God, ever liveth there to make intercession for us." Every prayer of penitence or praise, every supplication for mercies needed, every thanksgiving for mercies vouchsafed, is offered hopefully, only as it is offered through Him. Hence the Church reminds us, that however strong be the bond of duty which draws us to the footstool of the mercy-seat, "giving thanks unto Him—Holy Father, Almighty, everlasting God," no thanksgiving is accepted except through the *ascended* Saviour —"his most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who having, "after his most glorious resurrection, manifestly shewed himself to his Apostles," "in their sight ascended up into heaven[1]." Nor is that

[1] We have here a beautiful instance of the care with which the Church reminds us as well of the testimony whereon our faith rests, as on the doctrines which she offers for our belief. Does she require us to believe that Jesus really rose from the dead? she recalls to our attention the evidence of the fact. During forty days the risen Saviour lived with his disciples. How was it possible for them to be deceived in the fact?—So with respect to faith in his ascension, the Apostles were witnesses of the event under circumstances which leave no difficulty, except, indeed, to the caviller. The ascension of

all. Our Church closes this strain of gratitude by a reference to our Lord's memorable and affecting address to his disciples, when, upon finding them sunken in spirit, and lost to hope in the prospect of his death and removal from them, He declares, that "he goeth away from earth, to prepare a place for them in heaven, that where he is, there they may be also"—be with Him, not only peaceful and at rest, but triumphant and in glory—"that where he is, thither we might also ascend, and reign with him in glory."

Strangers to religious ordinances, then, must cease to wonder that the lowly Christian, as he bends before the altar of his God, and partaketh there, according to the Divine bidding, the blessed emblems of the body and blood of the ascended Saviour, finds his heart to strengthen with a firmer faith, to glow with a brighter hope, and spring again to duty with a holier resolution! He is, indeed, and must be still, an unworthy worshipper below, but his Saviour is not only reigning above, but preparing a place for him in his own bright heaven! Where now are the cares of earth? What now are its joys? The one are light as the other

our Lord into heaven did not take the Apostles off their guard; for it is especially observed by the historian, that "*while they beheld*, he was taken up out of their sight." Moreover, the wondrous event was sufficiently gradual to allow them to watch its progress, till "a cloud received him out of their sight;" and after having "looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up," they continued their stedfast look so long, that the angels, who had attended their ascended Lord, spake of them as "*gazing* up into heaven"—a term eminently expressive of the mingled feelings of wonder, awe, and conviction, which must at that moment have filled their minds. Their faith then was no weak credulity, but belief upon the plainest possible testimony. Acts i. 9—11.

are vain, in comparison. So long as these high, and holy, and happy thoughts fill the soul of the meet communicant, the Apostle's language can alone faithfully pourtray his feelings — "Our conversation is in heaven [1]."

PREFACE FOR WHIT-SUNDAY.

"Through Jesus Christ . . and of thy Son Jesus Christ."

If there be one event more than another, the grateful recollections of which are enduring; abiding with us in our going out, and coming in; it is that to the consideration of which we are called on Whit-Sunday; and for the celebration of which also there is therefore a peculiar preface appointed. On that day we commemorate the gracious heavenly gift—the Holy Ghost—by whom alone we can hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; can find strength for our weakness, courage for our fears, counsel for our doubts, and comfort for our tribulation. He is to us, what the Saviour was to his immediate disciples, our kind Master, with whom we spiritually live, and whom we love to obey "not for wrath but for conscience sake." He is our wise counsellor to whom we refer all our difficulties. He is our ever present friend [2], to whom we look, amid all sorrows, for sure consolation. Is He not emphatically, "the Comforter;" who is to "abide with us for ever?" Still more hopefully do we now offer our prayers, and joining our praises to those of the angel choir, with them laud and magnify God's

[1] Phil. iii. 20.

[2] John xv. 15.

holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord—knowing that if He intercede for us, our present bounden duty and service cannot but find acceptance. He who fulfilled his promises aforetime will fulfil them now. As He then gave to his Church the promised Comforter, and that Holy Comforter did come down from heaven; did "light upon the Apostles, to teach them and to lead them to all truth; giving them"—what to men unlearned was a necessary gift to fit them for their work of instruction, though a temporary gift to cease with the occasion—"the gift of divers languages;" and also a further gift, which was for them and their successors to the end of time, "boldness, with fervent zeal, constantly to preach the gospel unto all nations"—so to his Church now, and to each member of the same for ever, shall this same Holy Spirit be vouchsafed according to the need of each. Ministers shall never lack his ready aid to give them courage under all their dangers, hope under all their discouragements, support and wisdom under all their infirmities; nor shall the people committed to their charge lack holy and gentle dispositions to receive the word with meekness. and with affection esteem those who minister therein, for their Master's sake. Be it our care to seek his presence, follow his guidance, and rejoice in his comfort. And here the Church, never losing fit opportunity to instil instruction, reminds the congregation, of what too many live habitually, either forgetful or ignorant, that to the preaching of the Gospel we owe our position in the scale of nations. The light which, when first poured upon mankind, found other people high in civilization and great in power, shone here upon a benighted, despised people—rude

and barbarous; the skin of the forest-wild-beasts their clothing, and themselves utterly sunk in a wild and cruel superstition. Whilst we are ourselves thus blessed with the gift of the Spirit, whereby the heralds of salvation boldly sought these once inhospitable and forbidden shores, well may we praise with livelier joy the gracious Giver; "laud and magnify with all the company of heaven his glorious name," and rejoice humbly but sincerely, that "we have thus, by his grace in Christ Jesus, been brought out of darkness and error unto the clear light and true knowledge of Him, and of his Son Jesus Christ."

Reader! as thou art one of these children of the truth and the light,—as, being such, thou wouldst not relapse into error or sink again in darkness,—as thou wouldst not fear to answer to God for a right use of his precious gift thus free to thee,—heed the voice from heaven which bids thee "walk as children of light;" lest, otherwise, thou shouldst turn good into evil, blessing into cursing, hope into despair.

THE PREFACE FOR THE FEAST OF TRINITY.

"Who art one God . . . . without inequality."

This concluding preface has a beautiful reference to those which precede it; comprehensively expressive of the praise and honour due to each of the three Persons of the glorious Trinity in Unity.

The first preface addressed thanksgiving to the Father, for the gift of his Son Jesus Christ to redeem and save a lost world. The two following sang the

praises of that Saviour, living and dying and rising again and ascending up into heaven—for *us*. The next appropriate preface magnified the office and power of the Holy Ghost, to whom the Lord hath committed the care of his Church "for ever." This last proper preface proclaims of each Person that He is God [1]: and from our hearts we do believe this truth on the immoveable evidence of Holy Writ. Do we believe of the glory of the Father that He created and preserveth us? we believe of the glory of the Son that He hath secured to us life, even life eternal. Do we believe of the glory of the Father and the Son, that, soul and body, we are by them severally created anew as sons of God and heirs of his kingdom [2]? we believe of the glory of the Holy Ghost, that his it is to renovate this new life from day to day [3], and so sanctify our obedience, that we lose not the inheritance prepared for us. *That* then which we believe of the one, we believe of each of the three persons, without any difference or inequality. No power, other than God's, could create, or preserve, or redeem, or sanctify!

Therefore let the humble communicant, happy in his humility, rejoice in the strength of his salvation. He finds at the table of his Lord a present God! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! and with a heart animated to a feeling of the liveliest gratitude before his heavenly Father, and of perfect charity towards his fellow-creatures—his enemies freely forgiven, his friends freely loved, and all men held by him as

[1] See page 82. [2] Rom. viii 17.

[3] Our Church is express on this point of daily renovation by the Spirit. Refer to page 113. See also the Collect for the Sunday after Christmas day.

brethren—he may be poor and in misery, he may be oppressed and forsaken of the world; he may have sorrow for the past and fears for the future as to this life; yet, he knows that Almighty *God* is his *friend*; and he goes on his way rejoicing.

PRAYER.

"We do not presume . . . . . he in us."

After the song of praise to which each preface is an introduction, there follows a prayer, conceived in the full spirit of a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. It is, indeed, specially observable at this point of the service, with what added anxious care the Church, in her character of a spiritual nursing mother, watches over her children—watches, lest the ardour of high feelings so elevate the soul as to render us forgetful of the rock whence we were hewn, and the pit whence we were digged; lest, joining the angels' song, and sharing their praises of the Holy One, we forget that our service cannot have the angels' purity, but, if accepted, must owe its acceptance to *mercy*. Therefore she tempers our more ardent aspirations, by reminding us that, high as are our privileges—sons of God and fellow-heirs with Christ of glory, so long as we continue faithful—yet, such is the infirmity of the best of men, and all their good service is so entirely of continual grace, for which they must continually pray, that we are all undeserving these signal mercies, must all still approach as penitents, still implore pardon as offenders, ever *unworthy* of our high privileges; not

worthy of all the mercies, and of all the truth, O God, which thou hast shewed unto thy servants[1]; "not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table." "But since thy bounty hath provided a rich feast, I come at thy gracious bidding to share it, knowing that thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy. Mercy is thine own peculiar attribute. Which way soever I turn, thy mercy meets me. The earth in its increase, and the soul in its holiness, speak a God of mercy alike in his providence and grace. Mercy has turned curse into blessing on the *earth*; mercy has turned curse into blessing in the *soul* of man, through Christ[2]. Mercy reigneth over all."—When thus the communicant can feel his own great unworthiness, and his God's greater mercy, he pleads that mercy for such a supply of grace as may sanctify and bless his service. "Grant us, *therefore*," —because Thou art thus merciful,—"Grant us, *therefore*, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us." What a comprehensive prayer! how truly scriptural! how spiritual! how practical! Our hope for holy conduct; for holy thoughts; for union with God, spiritually here, eternally hereafter—*all* sought from the fountain of purity and holiness and power, opened on the cross when the Saviour died there. What strength in our plea! By Christ's body, which, broken on the cross, we by faith eat at his holy table; by his blood,

[1] Gen. xxxii. 10.

[2] Gal. iii. 13. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

of which, shed on the cross, we by faith at his table drink; we plead for the exercise of that infinite mercy of Almighty God which is over all his works.—*Can* that plea be offered in vain? Again! with what fulness and power and earnestness does the closing sentence of the prayer state the object of our holy service—that all we *do* may be sanctified; "our bodies made clean by his body—" that all we *think* may be as pure as angels' thoughts; "our souls washed through his most precious blood—" that the fruits of this holiness and purity may be a near and firm union with the same gracious Redeemer, our once incarnate God; "we evermore dwelling in him, and He in us." Every feeling thus regulated by his Spirit; every act, in obedience to his Will; our affections fixed on *Him*, loving *Him*, for He first loved us; and striving in all things so to conform ourselves to Him, that our lives here, being one with Him by obedience, they may hereafter be one with Him in his glory—ours be the hope that "with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, we may *evermore* laud and magnify God's great name"—"Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" —and know no end thereof for ever.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION.

"Almighty God, our heavenly Father . . in remembrance of me."

In this prayer of consecration, how admirably does the Church sum up the circumstances which attended the institution of the Holy Sacrament; how forcibly does *she* present them to our notice and regard; and how

turally does she open the prayer, by addressing Almighty God, not as our Lord, our King, our future Judge, but as our heavenly Father! To what else but his "tender mercy" as a most compassionate and loving Father, do we, rebellious sons, owe it, that a way of return to our filial duty and high hopes of inheritance has been opened to us, by a new and, to us, haply, a living way: our life purchased of Jehovah by the blood of his own sinless, pure, holy, eternal Son? Of this glorious truth, mark how every point in the history—tending to fix in our hearts a deeper and livelier sense of the infinite love which vouchsafed the gift—mark how well every point is set forth! How skilfully every incident connected with it is noted! The love which willed it was that of a Father: the gift free, to show that man could never have claimed it by desert[1]. Thus, again, the wisdom which planned the great scheme of salvation, and the power which so ordered events through long ages, that it was finally accomplished; they were exercised on our behalf because of his fatherly compassion. And whom did our heavenly Father give to be that gift of mercy? Even his *Son*, his *beloved* Son, his *only* Son, Jesus Christ—Jesus, to be the healer of those wounds which sin had inflicted on the soul: Christ, to be our spiritual King, reigning in us, and over us: reigning over us, a defence against *all* our enemies; reigning in us, a defence against ourselves[2]; for his

[1] Every gift which is vouchsafed of mercy must be a free gift; for the exercise of mercy implies guilt in the object of it, and the guilty cannot claim so much as *pardon*, still less *blessing!*

[2] "There is none other that fighteth for us, but only *Thou*, O *God!*" See the Litany.

Will then governs our hearts, and his laws *then* rule our actions. It had been much, that the Father having given his Son, the Son should lay aside the glory which He had with the Father before the world began, and appear upon earth exercising his supreme power over evil, and by his divine authority establishing the world in righteousness—it had been still more to have been born in the likeness of man, to have filled a lowly station in life, the object of doubt, and contempt, and scorn[1]; persecuted by his enemies, forsaken of his friends—but no suffering less than that of death would satisfy God's righteous wrath, and appease the indignant anger of a justly offended Father. To death, therefore, this Jesus, the Son of God, this only Son of the Father, this precious gift to man—to death he bowed himself[2]. Nay, still more surely to win our affections on the side of duty, that we be faithful to God and to his Christ for these so great mercies; still more deeply to engage our gratitude to such benefactors, we are conducted to the foot of the cross, that by the eye of faith we may there witness all which the Son suffered for us, and so estimate the extent of the mercy which the Father hath vouchsafed to us. The Holy One died on the cross; died a death of the most acute and aggravated pain. Yet to Him was the cross his triumph; for He "made *there* (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world[3]." Here let us pause, even at the foot of the cross. Can the soul desire more encouragement to

[1] Is. l. 6. Matt. xiv. 65. [2] Is. liii. 12. John xix. 30.
[3] Heb. vii. 27.

cast away the burden of sin which may long have oppressed it? What hitherto has irreligion done for the sinner, but rankle in his heart, "his plagues and his destruction;" perplexing his waking hours, harassing him in the night watches, embittering all the enjoyments of life, and aggravating all its sorrows? Behold the cross, and the Saviour there dying for us! The fulness, and perfection, and sufficiency of the sacrifice is ours — its power all-sufficient, if we will receive the same.

The Church then carries us back to the *occasion* upon which this blessed Sacrament was instituted: and certainly the scene so presented to us is one which it were impossible for any to contemplate unmoved. The very circumstances themselves which marked it, even taken apart from their heavenly object, are calculated to win at once the best affections of youthful hearts, and excite in them every generous feeling of sympathy, admiration, and gratitude. A friend visits criminals under condemnation of death. From the condemned, all hope seems cut off. Moved by compassion, the friend resolves to die in their stead. Before, however, He offers himself as their vicarial sacrifice, he reminds them not to forget *Him*, or the *proof* he was about to give them of his love; and knowing that in the infirmity of our nature we are too prone to forget the benefactor, even though we enjoy the benefit, he directs a *positive* memorial of his death in this ordinance; that by partaking of bread and wine, according to his appointment, we should, from time to time, show forth the Lord's death till He come. "Do this in *remembrance* of me." Your child will at once wonder that such a

command, even thus viewed, could ever be slighted. Add to this view of the command the further consideration that this friend died to save us not from temporal but from eternal death; and the obligation to keep in mind his memory in the way by himself appointed, gathers accumulated strength; and our sense of gratitude is only less deep and fervent than our sense of duty. Such at least will be the effect of the scene upon the ingenuous mind of youth.

Our Church still further evidences her truly evangelical and apostolical character by adopting, at the celebration of the Holy Sacrament, the very words used by Christ when he instituted it, and recorded as such by St. Paul[1]. "Take, eat," said the blessed One; "this is my body, which is given for you." Now, as He was himself in the body when He gave the bread, it is manifest that He meant the bread broken to represent his body about to be broken by death. Thus the command to eat of the bread as his body was intelligible; the ordinance being not only expressive of a commemorative rite, but being a means, when the outward sign was consecrated by prayer and the Holy Spirit in answer thereto, of conveying to all who should partake the same in faith, the full benefits of that passion which He endured in the body—even "a pledge to assure them thereof." So likewise when "taking the cup," and terming it "his blood," even before his blood had been shed, there could be no other intelligible meaning attached to his declaration, than that of the cup of wine being a representation of his blood; and that here also, whose

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 23.

should partake in faith, would enjoy all the benefits which his blood, so represented, is believed to convey. You will point out to your children that the Church terms the Gospel of Jesus Christ the *new* covenant, in order to distinguish it from the old covenant made through Moses. What fulness of consolation does the Scripture *thus* adduced convey to the assembled communicants! True it is that our Lord's expression —"My blood is shed for you and for *many*[1]"— appears at first to limit his mercy; yet is his mercy infinite. He died for all[2]. In his divine prescience, however, He knew that some there were who, after all his gracious offers of mercy, would not receive his mediation. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But *as many as* received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God[3]." Language cannot convey clearer instruction or greater encouragement. How can the grateful heart resist this Saviour's closing command—"Do this in *remembrance* of me?"

[1] Matt. xxvi. 28.

[2] If we were not persuaded that Christ died for the sins of all men, how could we, any one of us, dare to presume that He died for ours? What are we that we should be singled out for such mercy? So again, if we believe that He did die for all men, yet do not apply the truth to ourselves individually by faith, believing that he died for us, to take away *our* sins — where would be the benefit to us of a belief in Him? Hence the wisdom of our Church in addressing the communicants *individually;* and so bringing home to the heart of each, the blessed hope, that in the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ for a sinful *world*, they might, of grace, each gain *his own*.

[3] John i. 12.

THE MINISTER'S TWOFOLD ADDRESS TO THE COMMUNICANT.

"The body of our Lord . . . . . with thanksgiving."

In her most solemn and heart-stirring ministrations, the Church is never so rapt in her high thoughts but she gladly acknowledges to her sons that their help must be in the Lord their God. She remembers the foundation on which she is built, even prophets and apostles and evangelists, Jesus Christ himself the chief corner-stone. Hence, in presenting to her communicants the consecrated elements, according to Christ's holy institution, it is with the most marked and pious care that she guards them universally against supposing for one moment that there can be virtue or merit either in their act or in hers! Christ is all in all. In man, merit there can be none. It was the Saviour himself who declared even of the *perfect* Christian, that he was an "unprofitable servant[1]." She, therefore, accompanies the offer of those elements with an earnest prayer of supplication on behalf of *each* individual communicant, imploring the Divine Majesty that faith in the "body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for all, may preserve *his* body and soul unto everlasting life:" for there is none other name under heaven whereby we can be saved but the name of Christ. And that none should mistake her view of this subject, she, in her consequent directions

[1] Luke xvii. 10. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

to each, at first bids the communicant "take and eat this" bread, "in remembrance that Christ died for *him*," and then specifies both the act and its benefit to be *spiritual*, and grounded upon *faith*—"Feed on him in thy *heart*, by *faith* with thanksgiving[1]."

O! the blessed privilege of thus receiving by faith the benefits of the body and blood of our Saviour

[1] This point is admirably put in King Edward the Sixth's Catechism; so called, because enjoined by him to be taught throughout the realm. The injunction had its rise in a noble spirit of piety, and under the conviction, well worthy a royal mind, that as righteousness exalteth a nation, righteous principles should be inculcated universally and early. The Catechism itself was set forth under circumstances peculiarly interesting and affecting, for it bears the royal command, dated May 20, 1553—the very year which closed the short earthly reign of that youthful Christian King. The explanation there given of faith, as the medium whereby in the sacrament the benefits of Christ's death and passion are conveyed to the communicants, is this—"Faith is the mouth of the soul, whereby we receive this very heavenly meat; full both of salvation and immortality, dealt among us by means of the Holy Ghost."

You will bring this subject in some degree more within the comprehension of youthful minds, if you remind your children that it is upon the principle of faith we engage in any spiritual work. We pray to God, and praise Him in our services, by faith—for we see Him not, yet we address Him as present, and believe Him to be present, though we discern Him not. So we feed upon Christ in our heart spiritually, "by faith with thanksgiving." We see Him not, but we believe that his Spirit is present to us, "strengthening and refreshing our souls by his body and blood, as our bodies are by the bread and wine," which are emblems of Him. Thus, though the mystery still remains—a holy mystery, never to be solved by reason—it is replete with blessing, when received by faith. The sincere communicant doth take and eat in this holy sacrament with a trustful firmness in so gracious a pledge of grace—a firmness which, deriving its strength from a higher than any human source, no vain fears shall shake, no doubts shall weaken, but which shall gather from every fresh participation of the blessing a livelier succour and a holier strength.

Christ! Our souls cannot fail to be thereby strengthened for their duties, and refreshed amid their trials. Your children's warm hearts will feel all this; and, as they take and eat the bread, emblem of the bread of life, and drink the cup of blessing, emblem of the water of the fountain of life, gratitude will fill their souls. They will for ever remember Him by whose body and blood they are saved; and in that remembrance will be thankful—thankful that the Saviour died for all men; thankful that his blood cleanseth from all sin; above all, they will feed on Him in their heart by thanksgiving, because by faith in Him whom that blessed Sacrament commemorates, they look to receive those benefits of his passion conveyed thereby to the faithful, and ever hold fast the well-founded hope, that the Saviour of the *world* will save *them*.

"The blood of our Lord . . . . be thankful."

THE same observations which applied to the preceding address, are applicable to this. Here, also, the address is pointed to the individual; in order that each communicant may feel his own share in this blessed ordinance. It appeals moreover to our tenderest and best feelings. Did one shed his blood for *our* sakes! did that Being pour out his life for *us* in an agonizing death, that we might live? He himself argues that "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends[1]." Shall we, *can* we turn away from

[1] How pleasing it is to think that our tenderest and best affections are sanctified by the adoption of them, to signify the divine regard for man. God is "our *Father*;" and He has himself declared, "that

such a benefactor, when He calleth us to an ordinance, which He has appointed as the commemoration of his sacrifice! Can we unmoved behold this Being, hanging upon the cross, a spectacle to men and angels? Can we really believe that our hope, our only hope of

sooner shall a *mother* forget her sucking child, than He forget his creatures. He therefore *loveth all* men, even as parents their children. But the more eminently good among men are styled even the *friends* of God, and are thereby more eminently honoured; for where are the father, the mother, who *love* not their children? But if children would be regarded as *friends*, they must be *good*. They must have some attaching qualities, as well as kindred, ere they can be so received: they must have qualities, which call forth approval; principles, which justly claim honour; affections, which win esteem. Thus Abraham was the *friend* of God; because he was faithful and righteous*. Our blessed Saviour likewise so entirely *loved* all men, that He died for all men. But it was to those who faithfully followed Him; those whose courage called forth his "Well done, good and faithful servant;" those whose faith triumphed over the taunts and persecution of the wicked; those who so gratefully loved Him, that they shared his cross and his self-denial, and wept his sorrows—it was to *those* He gave the distinguishing and honourable appellation of *friends* †.

My young reader! at all times, specially when you leave the holy house, and holy table of the Lord, cherish in your heart every noble feeling—courage to do right, patience under wrong, submission to the will of your Father in heaven, honour to your earthly parents—and walk as with a present God in your daily path of duty; his word a light into the path of righteousness, his Spirit a counsellor and comforter, to walk therein safely and peacefully. So will your attendance at the Sacrament be blessed, and your heart may indeed be thankful. Your mind and soul, your understanding and your feelings, being kept in a holy frame by the influence of the Spirit, whose aid you will have gained, you safely pursue your Christian course of peace and honour. Whilst the storm of passion may toss to and fro the worldly and the stranger to the gospel, you are anchored on the rock; and that rock—Christ.

---

* James ii. 23. † John xiii. 15.

preserving body and soul unto everlasting life, rests upon the efficacy of that sacrifice which was made by Him crucified, and which, by his own express command, is to be thus commemorated—can we believe this, and yet turn away from such a benefactor, and virtually slight the sacrifice, by slighting the ordinance of which *He*, who offered the sacrifice, enjoined the observance for ever? Nay, forbid it every better feeling of which man is capable! Duty and love, honour and gratitude, combine to bring us with all humility to the holy table of the Lord; that there, with hearts and minds fixed upon the cross, we may partake in faith of those emblems of Him who died there; pledges of his grace there purchased for us, and his love there sealed to us. Are you a communicant in youth, for the first time appearing at the table of your Lord? Approach gladly. The fountain of mercy opened on the cross washeth away all sin, truly repented of; supplieth grace to all who need, and to the extent needed; preserving the faithful, soul and body, unto life everlasting. Partake thou, then, joyfully of this cup of blessing; drink it in remembrance that the blood which it represents was "shed for *thee*; and be thankful."

Perhaps the Christian knows no such moment of peace, never so fully shares the glowing rapture of the Patriarch, in his more immediate communing with Jehovah[1]—never approximates more nearly to that blessed state of feeling which the Apostle describes as having his conversation in heaven, than when he closes this part of his holy service. He has himself partaken in faith of the body and blood of his Redeemer; and

[1] Gen. xxviii. 17.

thereby, as he humbly trusts, "is one with Christ, as Christ with God." Transformed by the renewing of his mind, "old things are passed away—behold! all things are become new." What clearing of himself has there been! He wonders that ever this world, with its vain views and wishes, its vain fears and hopes, should have had the mastery over him. He is filled now with good resolutions; he is strong in faith, that the grace he has sought and found will enable him to bring the same to good effect; and, so strengthened, he prepares again to engage in his worldly calling, and do his duty in that state of life to which it may have pleased his heavenly Father to call him—not as unto man, but as unto God.

Duly, however, to regulate this happy feeling, the Church still further guards him against those temptations of the world, which yet await him when he returns even to the appointed duties of it. Hers is the anxious maternal care, whose constant aim is to fortify her sons against coming danger. She therefore leads him and his fellow-communicants to their heavenly Father, that from Him they may ask and gain both his *preventing* and *following* grace; so shall evil be either removed or overcome. For this purpose they are directed with one voice as with one heart, to offer that only perfect form of words which their Saviour did himself frame for them, and which, we all humbly trust, can never be offered in vain by the sincere and faithful supplicant[1].

[1] Upon the character and general excellency of this prayer, the reader is referred to a note in page 108.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

O Thou, "*our Father which art in heaven*," yet who deignest to spread for thy children on earth a rich table with a feast of good things, and dost welcome them, thy family, that by partaking thereof in faith, they may both remember Him who for their sakes was contented to be betrayed and delivered up into the hands of wicked men, and suffer death; and also may gain strength and refreshment to their souls for working out their salvation—O! heavenly Father, we desire to thank Thee and to praise Thee and to hallow thy name! And hath it not been hallowed in this service! With what humble faith, with what glowing hope, with what fervent and deep devotion have thine adopted children praised Thee, O Father; Thee, O Son; Thee, O Holy Ghost—the one only God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being; and who "hast holden us up," soul and body, "ever since we were born!" "Our praise shall be always of Thee[1]"—for ever "*hallowed be thy name!*" And in honour of that name, reverencing the laws of thy spiritual kingdom on earth, and looking to the future revelation of thy kingdom of glory in heaven, our hearts, as they rejoiced to bow before thy throne in this solemn service, and to receive thence thy laws, were raised in earnest prayer that thy kingdom of grace might be extended over all the world. May we, thy faithful subjects, who have here pledged our fidelity, never forfeit our pledge. May we uphold ourselves in the truth by looking to that hour,

[1] Ps. lxxi. 5.

in which though now we be a Church militant, contending for the laws of thy spiritual kingdom, that it be established in righteousness here, we shall be admitted, a Church triumphant in heaven, to share thy kingdom hereafter, when it shall be established for ever in glory! O Father! may "*thy kingdom come!*" We have joined too with angels and archangels in singing praise to thy great name—grant that in sharing the praises of those heavenly intelligences, we may also share their obedience. Emulating their zeal and their purity, their unity of purpose and heavenly harmony, let *us* also obey Thee because we *love* Thee! What if some, professing to be thy servants, have hitherto done their own will, not thine; have day by day in solemn mockery from early years, offered this petition, but cared not to act upon it! All is changed now. The heart is resolved, henceforth, to follow the motions of thy good Spirit, and offer in sincerity the petition, "*Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*"—If we could always feel as unshackled by the world as we do when engaged in this service; our heart having one only object, our Saviour and our God; easy indeed would be the duty of a holy and angelic obedience. When we further pray, "*Give us, this day, our daily bread*"—our petition is offered in mingled gratitude and humility. We thank our heavenly Father for this day's supply of spiritual manna: but in the strength now supplied we cannot stand unto the end. That would be to suppose us absolutely above future sin and infirmity. "O bounteous Father! who openest thine hand, and fillest all things living with plenteousness, vouchsafe thy bounty to us—and since day by day we need renovation to our spiritual life, give us there-

fore *day by day* grace for our souls, even as day by day we pray Thee to give food for our bodies." And though we thus pray, not each one for himself only, but for all men, yet specially for "this congregation here present:" and if among them, husband and wife and children and near friends be assembled, where is the heart which turneth not its thoughts to *them*, when the lips utter the supplication. By the strength thus supplied, we may hope for power to exercise the duties enjoined us, even to the forgiveness of our enemies, as we would be ourselves forgiven of God. Men of the most ardent spirit, under the deepest injury, may yet find motive for forgiveness, when they consider that they have by faith been to the foot of the cross, and there beheld the Being, who died for us all and sealed our pardon with his blood, *upon that one condition* that we first forgive others. Happy those whose heart is clear of revenge, and anger, and enmity! It is for them hopefully to pray—"*Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*[1]." We here doubtless adopt the sentiment of the

[1] Few things, as a mother's quick apprehension soon perceives, press more heavily upon the sensitive minds of the young, than when they find themselves the objects of enmity and ill will. If it so befal your children, guard them against permitting this painful feeling to interfere with their religious duties. Turn the occasion to good account. Use it as an opportunity of strengthening and elevating their tone of feeling and of action. Strive to raise them above the natural influence of indignation at injustice, or the desire of retaliation for injury. Remind them that the condition on which we petition pardon for ourselves would not have been introduced into a prayer intended for universal application, had it not been *impossible* for any one to pass through a sinful world, himself a sinner before God, without being exposed to various injuries, from the despitefulness of the proud—injustice, envy, malice, and other uncharitableness.

Apostles, when in the blissful hour of our Lord's transfiguration they had their conversation with the inhabitants of heaven—"Lord, it is good for us to be here[1]." Here, however, we cannot abide alway. We must to the world again. Our Lord and Master taketh us not out of the world, but He intercedes that we be delivered from the evil of it. To the world then we shall soon return; to its cares and its pleasures, its perils and its various trials—"O merciful Father, have compassion upon us, and look graciously upon our infirmities! *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*" Mark well how opportunely this petition is here offered! In the peaceful hour of our holy worship, we perhaps feel as if nothing could move us from a stedfast purpose of henceforth living to the glory of God, and seeking the welfare of our soul as

Some may be tried in this way more severely than others, but all must have their share of such a trial. St. Paul refers to this view of the subject, when he thus limits his exhortation to peace—"*As much as lieth in you* live peaceably with all men." There are those who will not permit their neighbour to live at peace with them. But your child, encouraged by you to remember this petition and the condition annexed to it, will learn to forgive them; and if they neither forgive in return, nor accept forgiveness from him, the misery, as the guilt, is their own; for the revengeful, to their cost, do but nourish a subtle serpent, which will soon turn and sting the breast which nourishes it. The servant of Christ, however, is free from the misery of revenge, because He is free from the guilt of it. Remind then your children, if haply they suffer from the injustice or unkindness of others, that as the pain they suffer can be removed only by forgiveness on their part, and as it is by Divine grace they will be enabled to forgive, they must the more earnestly seek that grace. Their own warm hearts will in the mean time convince them, that, if at any time or in any place specially, they may look to gain this needful aid, it is when and where they are now seeking it—even at the table of their Lord.

[1] Luke ix. 33.

the one thing, above all others, needful. Then comes the salutary warning, that "thinking we stand, we take heed lest we fall[1]." The very petition itself admonishes us, that being continually liable to sins, our trust must be *continually* upon the same grace, which we have here sought, and which here we trust to have found. Our prayer then is, that when again we are surrounded by the temptations of the world, whatever be our station, whatever our condition, we may be delivered from the evil of it: if rich, that we be delivered from the pride and selfishness, the luxury and ambition, to which riches tempt their possessors: if poor, that we be delivered from murmuring at our lot, from dishonest gains, from coveting what is not our own; saved severally from those evils to which, from the circumstances in which we may be placed, we are more specially exposed. Nor doubt we a favourable answer to our petition. He who ruleth all things, and controlleth all evil, himself will pray the Father that He will deliver us. Such an intercessor cannot plead in vain. He will plead that holy cross and passion, the benefits of which you humbly trust to have shared at his table. Faith reminds you that there by his one oblation of Himself once offered, He made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.—Shall not the benefits of that thy sacrifice be *ours*, O blessed Jesus! What is to limit thy power, who, though in the likeness of man thou didst pour out thy blood upon the cross to save sinners, didst rise from the dead by thine own power, and by thine own power ascend into heaven; the

[1] 1 Cor. x. 12. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

eternal, the everlasting—One with the Father? and "*thine*," O heavenly Father, "*is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever! Amen.*"

PRAYERS.

"O Lord and heavenly Father . . world without end."

THE feeling which marks the two following prayers, you are, by the course of this service hitherto, well prepared to adopt. Both of them are highly Scriptural; each equally humble and hopeful. In humility, as servants, and in hope as children, we "desire our Lord and heavenly Father mercifully to receive this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." The sacrifice of Jesus Christ we know He does receive favourably. *That* must be acceptable in his sight, being the sacrifice of his "beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased." But it can be of his goodness and mercy only, through that same Saviour whose merits and death we plead, that either *our* sacrifice and offering of praise can be received, or that we and his whole Church can hope to obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion. But vainly shall our lips utter these supplications, unless our hearts respond, and our conduct agree thereto. "Not every one that *saith* unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Hence we declare our resolve to praise Him, not with our lips only, but in our lives; devoting to his service all our best energies; and since Christ

gave up Himself for us—yielding his body for us, and "making his soul an offering for sin," it is but reasonable that we in return give up ourselves, soul and body, to *Him:* we therefore "offer and present ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a *reasonable*, holy, and *lively* sacrifice unto Him[1]." We thus draw a strong distinction between our offerings and those of the heathen world. *They* were of *irrational* creatures, and marked with unholy rites, and *dead* as to any evidence of a spiritual and holy life: *ours* is a spiritual offering. Our God is a spirit, and whoso would worship Him acceptably, must worship Him in spirit—we thus are spiritually crucified with Christ. Nor can the heart forbear to express, with that love for the brethren which characterizes the gospel, its tender care for those who share this service; humbly beseeching our heavenly Father, "that *all* we, who are partakers of this Holy Communion, may be fulfilled with his grace and heavenly benediction"—our pardon and our blessing sealed in heaven. Nay, deeper still is our expression of humility. We confess ourselves not worthy even to offer this sacrifice of prayer and praise. Does the scoffer ask—"Why then offer it?" Our answer is ready. We offer it because we are commanded so to do, and because that which is in itself unworthy, may yet be accepted for another's sake, if offered in token of obedience. We, therefore, bring our lowly offering, nothing doubting; for our trust is in *his* meritorious sacrifice, whose death we have now commemorated, and the benefits of whose meritorious cross and passion we hope to have received. God will, for *his* sake, "not

[1] Rom. xii. 1.

weigh our merits, but pardon our offences." Alas! with our best care, as we readily confess, neither worth nor merit can attach to us. We are pardoned, reconciled, loved; not because we could justly claim, or reasonably expect such favour; but because God gives his grace, free and unbounded, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." "*By Him*" also, it is, who himself, by his blood, purifies us from sin; and "*with Him*," who in the unity of the Holy Ghost, sanctifieth and uniteth us to Him; that a lost world is recovered to the honour and glory of the Father." For these so great and manifold blessings, well may we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

PRAYER.

"Almighty and everlasting God . . glory, world without end."

How difficult it is, when we again mingle with the world, to retain the delightful and animating feelings of trust and holy joy which filled the soul when engaged in this service, you well know. When you return to your home, though you be strengthened for its duties, yet those duties may often be mingled with many cares, and sorrows, and perplexities, which will claim your attention; and may haply bring a cloud over that serenity of mind which in the hour of solemn service had been yours. Danger, too, may arise, lest the good impression then made, suppose it not removed, may yet be weakened and rendered powerless. Hence, in this second prayer, the Church, after offering thanksgiving for the rich feast which her children

have shared, and having in a marked manner declared the high spiritual and heavenly benefits which it conveys, closes with an earnest and affecting supplication in their behalf for the grace of *perseverance*.

In stating the benefits of the Lord's Supper, she wisely, as the service draws to a close, admonishes us that they are *his*, "who duly receives the holy mysteries" by which they are conveyed — even *his* who, having approached with the requisite preparation of a clean heart and a right mind, in repentance, in faith, in obedience, lives to the glory of his God, and the welfare of mankind; at peace with God, and in charity with men. She the more earnestly impresses this admonition, lest self-love interfere to make us forget that so only, as we partook of the blessed emblems of the crucified Saviour, can the soul have been duly nourished "with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood." And nobly does she strive to sustain our trust and confidence in God's mercy through the Saviour. She reminds us that by this blessed feast God doth assure every meet communicant of his favour and goodness towards them; and that they are thereby more and more closely joined together as members of Christ's Church; the very members incorporate in the mystical body of his Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people—the communion of Saints upon earth. But far higher views are opened to us, far nobler advantages thus assured to us! Hereby "we are also heirs of God's *everlasting* kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of his dear Son." United to Him on earth, we are hereby united to Him for ever, "members of Christ, children of God;"

and, as fellow-heirs of the same Jesus Christ, through *Him* "inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."

Retain we the full power of these hopes, and what shall move us from the love of God and of our souls! But danger is, that though in this holy happy hour we embrace the blessed hope of spiritual and everlasting life thus set before us, we may not hold it fast when the enemies of our soul strive to rend it from us. The grace we trust to have gained must *abide* with us, else our own strength will be vain. In the words of this admirable prayer we therefore humbly beseech our heavenly Father "so to assist us with his grace, that we may *continue* in that holy fellowship." *Perseverance* must be of the Spirit from on high: and as professing even a holy *fellowship with Christ* profiteth nothing, if unaccompanied by *like-mindedness with Christ* and a course of action corresponding thereto, we further implore God's grace, "that we may do all such *good works* as he hath prepared for us to walk in,"—and what these are the Gospel plainly sets forth. This, however, as all our other blessings, we ask solely "through Jesus Christ our Lord;" and to Him alone, "with the Father and the Holy Ghost, do we give all honour and glory, world without end." *Amen.*

THE HYMN.

"Glory be to God on high . . in the glory of God the Father."

THERE is scarcely any occasion on which we can be called to act, in duly observing the ordering of which we may not, either directly or incidentally, learn much

for our guidance from the example of our blessed Lord himself. Thus we read, that after He had instituted and celebrated the holy sacrament of his body and blood, He and his disciples poured forth their full feeling of devout thanksgiving in singing a hymn of praise[1]. The Church, following his steps, takes the same course, and leads her grateful sons to offer up a noble hymn of thanksgiving to the great God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — to whose favor, by virtue of the holy mysteries in which they have been engaged, lost sinners are re-called, forfeited love restored, peace long broken again cemented, and man's high hope of heaven once fallen, raised again.

It is, indeed, a glorious and animated strain of gratitude, in which the whole of the congregation now join with one voice—a strain in beautiful harmony with the holy and heavenly feelings which the service has throughout cherished. Has it been your high employ with angels and archangels to laud and magnify the name of your God? Lo! the angel-song is itself now yours. That heavenly host hailed the Saviour, when He came a light unto the world; they hailed his advent, as bringing "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men."—Yours, as you welcome his advent specially into your own heart, on this his own holy day, at his own holy table, and by his own holy and more immediate presence—you also hail Him as the Being through whom you, even *you* in your lowly *penitence*, can bring glory to God in the highest, for you are a monument of the power of his grace; your course is "on earth peace," for your

[1] Matt. xxvi. 30.

God is your friend; and towards men you feel only "good will," for his sake, who is their God and your God, their Father and your Father. You know not how, with sufficient strength of language, to express your ardent love towards such a God! Fain *would* you praise Him, and bless Him, worship Him, glorify Him, and give Him thanks for his great glory, displayed in the wondrous redemption you have now commemorated! What a sharp incentive to a prompt obedience to his laws, that He is your "heavenly King!" What a soothing thought that He will hear the very wishes of your heart, for He is now your reconciled "Father Almighty." If *He* be *for* thee, *who* can be *against* thee?"

And what if "the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ," was manifest in the flesh, as man! what if He did give his body to death on the cross, and there pour out his most precious blood, to take away the sins of the world! He is not less "the Lord God." That he does by that sacrifice of Himself which we have commemorated, take away the sins of *the world*, is but our prevailing plea that He will have mercy upon *us*. And because He is God and man; his divine nature never lowered, his divine power never weakened, though in his human nature He was despised and rejected; we by every earnest expression of which language is capable, implore mercy at his hands—reiterating our petition in token of our entire and sole trust in Him[1]. To neither

[1] It is well worthy of remark, in meditating upon the history of our blessed Lord, with what marked force and more than usual earnestness He impresses upon the minds of his followers the marvellous truth, that in the darkest hour of his trial, his glory was never clouded; in the lowest depth of his suffering as man, his

angel nor spirit we look as our mediator, but to *Him* only. To Him alone we offer our prayer, for He is still very God of very God; and through Him we the more hopefully look to receive mercy, as He ever liveth to make intercession for us, sitting on the right hand of God the Father! To Him, there sitting in "the glory which He had before the world was," we pour forth our importunate supplication, that He "have mercy upon us[1]."

And where is there one holy to be compared unto *Him*? Other lords the worldly recognise, but there is none like unto *Him*, who is above all lords. Thus, in the perfection of his holiness and the majesty of his power, He is emphatically "the Lord our righte-

power was never weakened as God. True it is, that the wicked were agents to bring about his death; but he asserts distinctly that they were but ministering to fulfil his own purpose. "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again*." So, also, in the beautiful prayer which He offers up to the Father on behalf both of his apostles, upon whom, in the arduous work of their ministry, he prays for aid proportionate to the work, and of all believers also, upon whom likewise He implores blessing — he insists upon the same truth; declaring that his Father "hath given Him power over all flesh," that *He* should himself "give eternal life to as many as God had given Him†." And after his resurrection He again proclaims the like glorious truths — "*All power* is given unto me in heaven and in earth‡." This is not only a wondrous saying, whereon we are to meditate, but a glorious saying wherein we may rejoice. This Being, so lowly and loving towards us that He died for us, is so high above all things in heaven and earth, that He is able, as He is willing, to save to the uttermost *all* who trust in Him.

[1] John xvii. 5. See page 140.

---

* John x. 18. † John xvii. 2. ‡ Matt. xxviii. 18.

ousness." As with the Father He is equal in power, so with the Holy Ghost He is equal in holiness; the author of holiness; the sanctifier who halloweth the faithful; most high in the glory of God the Father; and with the Father and the Holy Ghost, God blessed for ever!

The service is now drawing to a close. It remains that the Church should pronounce her benediction upon the congregated communicants. But she lingers yet. You yourself, a mother perhaps, can well understand her trembling anxiety at the moment she is about to send back her children to their usual cares and duties, their trials and temptations. She views them, as you might view a loved child about to sail from you to some land of peril; again embarking "upon the waves of this troublesome world." You cannot wonder that she still once more urges them to animate themselves afresh by prayer; again briefly but energetically address themselves to the Giver of all grace that they may be furnished with strength for their day. And who shall tell what to those loved ones a day may bring forth? In anxious love, therefore, she hath provided a few short collects, one or either of which may be used before she gives her final blessing; that so the soul may gather up, as it were, every scattered good thought, confirm every high resolve, refresh its courage, and reanimate its hope, by fixing itself wholly upon its God.

COLLECTS.

FIRST COLLECT.

"Assist us mercifully, O Lord! . . through Jesus Christ our Lord."

As the communicant begins, so he ends his worship; in a spirit of the deepest humility: looking to please God by his services, only so far as by grace he be enabled thereto. Even "in *these* his supplications and prayers," holy and reverent though they have been, he implores "the Lord to assist him," and *that* "*mercifully*;" his very prayers accepted, not in justice for their worth's sake, but in compassion, because of all their infirmities. Nor is it only in the hour of worship that you pray his aid. He it is who, in love indeed like your own,—if you are a mother reading these pages,—but with a sure safety, which neither your anxious care nor any human wisdom could supply, can so dispose and guard the way of your children amid the varied difficulties of life, that they be led at last to the attainment of everlasting salvation. Yet, *that* must ever be a mother's first and anxious care. And who shall tell what may be the "changes and chances of this mortal life," which await your children[1]? A

[1] It is well, perhaps, to explain to the younger reader the meaning of the terms used in this prayer, and the distinction of circumstances which they are intended to designate. In the Church's anxious anticipation of the "changes and chances of this mortal life" to which her followers will be exposed, when they leave the immediate service of their God in the congregation and the salutary influence of their act of worship, she speaks not of any vague indeterminate events which may happen irrespectively of the divine ordering or

thousand changes *may* happen; some *must* happen. Youth must change to age, health to sickness, life to death. You look around, and behold the whole world, a changeful world; and you feel that your dear ones must be exposed to its changes. "O God!" whispers your prayerful heart, "O mighty God! be *Thou* to my loved children a refuge and defence in their going out and their coming in; the sanctifier of their thoughts, the guide of their lips, the disposer of their ways; and going hence in the strength of thy grace, may they at

permission. She intends no adoption of the cold and senseless doctrine held by those who, in a perversion of intellect not less wretched than their blindness of heart, would try and persuade themselves and others that chance, in the usual acceptation of the term, governs all things. No such doctrine does the Church adopt. Her's is the humble faith which receives unreservedly and believes joyfully that "not a sparrow falleth to the ground, but our heavenly Father knoweth it;" nay, that "the very hairs of our head are numbered;" that "*He* killeth and *He* maketh alive;" "*He* worketh all things after the counsel of his will;" "in *His* hand is our breath, and *His* are all our ways." Not a holy thought, therefore, has been cherished throughout this service, not a holy resolve determined upon, not a holy fear or holy hope excited and retained, but that we believe, to our joy, that it is altogether "known to Him with whom we have to do." The distinction, then, between the expressions in question is this:—by the *changes* of this mortal life, we are to understand its *ordinary fluctuations*—youth to age, health to sickness, riches to poverty, and such like alternations. In the term "*chances*," the Christian comprehends events which are of less ordinary occurrence, and spring up when least expected. How full of such *unlooked for trials* life is, few cannot by their own sad experience bear testimony! What a blessed hope, then, has the faithful communicant, that even against these he is guarded; that his heart is prepared to stand firmly and finally subdue even these trials by the *preventing* grace of God. With faith thus fixed unshrinkingly upon the "gracious and ready help" of his *all-present* and ALL-RULING God, he believes the animating assurance of the Psalmist—"The Lord shall preserve thee from *all* evil, yea it is even He that shall keep thy soul." Ps. cxxi. 7.

all times and in all places, in poverty and riches, in sorrow and joy, in youth and age, in life and in death,—may they "EVER be defended by thy most gracious and ready help, through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

SECOND COLLECT.

"O Almighty Lord . . through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

STILL looking anxiously to the dangers which beset and oppose the exercise of practical piety, we beseech the Lord God Almighty and everlasting, that in his omnipotence and omnipresence, He would be *ever* at hand; especially when temptations to evil arise. On Him we rely, to fill our souls with the influence of his Holy Spirit, and guide our ways by the wisdom of the same: the thoughts of our hearts thereby sanctified, our purposes thereby directed, our whole conduct thereby governed; diligent in doing the works of his commandments. And for such an obedience you well know what aid is wanting. Earnestly, therefore, do you implore it for your children, as for yourself. If God throw over you and them the shield of his most mighty protection—your Champion to fight for you against your spiritual enemies—all will be well at last: however numerous may have been the enemies; however hard the struggle against them. So sanctified, so directed, so governed, it were a coward-heart not to trust that He, your guide, your sanctifier, your governor, will preserve you and those dear to you, both in body and soul; through our mighty Lord and all-prevailing Saviour, Jesus Christ.

THIRD COLLECT.

"Grant, we beseech Thee, . . through Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE sentiment which this collect would impress upon our minds is the necessity of a right spirit both in hearing and in receiving the word of God; a necessity enforced in the marked admonition of our blessed Lord, which He delivered as a natural conclusion of the instruction He had been conveying to his disciples after the parable of the sower[1]. "Take heed, *therefore*, *how* ye hear[2]:" as though He had said; "Listen, that you may not doubt, or cavil, or disobey. Listen, as those who would learn wisdom, reap instruction, and gain comfort. So hear, with a humble, willing, and

[1] Luke viii. 5. Our divine Teacher had been warning careless hearers, that the word could no more profit them, than the seed which fell by the way side could be expected to give increase. Again, the hard heart, which, as it received the seed, permitted it not to enter in, neither caring for nor cherishing it, like the barren rock in the midst of fertile fields, remained but a beacon to others, that they, whilst time and opportunity were theirs, softened their minds, and broke up the stubbornness of pride and self-will, lest they, too, be left in the coldness of their pride and the fruitlessness of their arrogancy, to pine disregarded and valueless. To the rich in their splendour, and to the poor in their discontent, is added an illustrative caution that they allow *not* the weeds of worldliness—the pleasures of the one condition, nor the cares of the other—to master by their growth the springing up of the seeds of grace and virtue sown by the word; lest, so impeded in their growth, they bring no fruit to perfection. At the same time, the strongest possible motive is given to every faithful servant of Christ to be earnest in hearing and obeying the word, and bringing forth fruit with patience, in the declaration of our blessed Lord, that such are of an *honest* and *good* heart—good ground bringing forth fruit unto holiness, the end whereof is life eternal.

[2] Luke viii. 18.

teachable heart, that the word be not heard in vain, but may sink deep into your heart, and be as entirely part of your mind, as a graft becomes part of the tree into which it is inserted; and like a graft, well flourishing, bring forth much fruit—even the fruit of a holy and religious life, to the honour and praise of God, and the eternal welfare of your soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

FOURTH COLLECT.

"Prevent us, O Lord, . . through Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE Church having already led us to the fountain of grace, here instructs us to pray, that this grace may not only be present with us as our guide, but may *prevent*—or *go before* us—duly regulating *all* our undertakings[1]; preparing us to think aright what we shall

[1] No reasonable man expects his plans to be successful further than they are prospered of God. This is so universal a feeling in the common every-day concerns of life, that the husbandman, when expressing his hope of a fruitful harvest after all his toil, closes his expression of hope with a declaration of faith—"if it please God!" So it is in all our doings. The divine favour must *prevent*, or *go before* us. That preventing grace it is which sanctifieth our thoughts, whence spring our actions; and so *goes before* us! Nor can any activity be expected to prosper, which is not so sanctified and regulated. Your children, as they gradually gain experience of human life, may, perhaps, wonder how it is, that if this be a just view of God's ordering the affairs of men, bad men should flourish; that sometimes the envious and malicious, the unjust and the selfish, the slanderer, and even the blasphemer, prosper in the land, become rich and great and of worldly consideration. David was struck with the same apparent difficulty. "I do see the ungodly," saith he, "in such prosperity. They come in no misfortune like other folk, neither are they plagued like other men." Such was the Psalmist's lament. But

do, and how we shall act, so as to *please* our *God*. The direction is given in accord with the apostle's injunction, that "*whatever* we do, we do *all* to the glory of God [1]." Wherefore, ere we begin any undertaking, let us pause and reflect. Is our purpose true and just and honest? Is it such a purpose as that we can pray God's blessing upon it? If having undertaken, we continue it, then let us take good heed that the spirit in which we pursue it be agreeable to the spirit of his word and will. And when we bring our purpose to its close, be it our care, that it tend to the glory of God, and the welfare of our souls. To this end, however, his gracious favour must both prevent and follow us; go before our steps, and accompany them; for by the influence of the same grace alone it is that we can so direct any of our doings, that they may be pleasing in his sight, and finally by his mercy obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

calm reflection convinced him that this worldly prosperity was to the wicked a part of retributive punishment. "Thou, O God, didst set them in slippery places." He confessed it was "his own infirmity" in faith For at last he represents himself as looking for their place, but, behold, it could not be found. "I went by," said he, "but lo, he was gone" The end, therefore, is not yet: and though *sure* judgment is for an hereafter, God sees fit, even here often, to bring punishment upon the wicked, by making them the agents of their own misery, and, in their very cunning, the workers of their own ruin. The unbeliever in his cold pride, the scoffer in his scorn, the slanderer in his self reproaching lie, the envious in their malice, and the worldly in their selfishness—all and each could tell, for they all feel, the certainty of this truth. Assure, then, your dear children, that if they would be really happy, they must be guided by God's preventing and following grace. If so they wisely act, they may haply be enabled to "keep innocency and take heed to the thing that is right, for that, and that alone, shall bring peace at the last."

[1] 1 Cor. x. 31.

FIFTH COLLECT.

A FEELING pervades this collect, which is one amongst the many proofs supplied by her services, of the provident care taken by the Church to uphold in every way the honour of Him to whose throne she leads her followers. God being from everlasting to everlasting, to Him must be known equally what has been and what is to be, as well as what is. To scruple this, were to question the divine majesty of Jehovah. To comprehend the mystery, indeed, were far beyond the range of any finite intellect, but to receive it humbly as a truth confessedly incomprehensible, is the special province of faith, which is the evidence of things not seen even by the mental eye. When, therefore, the worshipper pours forth the expression of his wants and wishes; when he supplicates for pardon and peace, for strength and holiness, for faith and hope and charity and other heavenly graces; he must not be supposed forgetful of the glorious attribute of Divine omniscience. He is well aware that his wants as well as his sins, his desires as well as his infirmities, his mind and his affections, are all alike known to his heavenly Father long before. Still the Church, wisely judging that every doubt should be removed as to the faith of her sons and their right apprehension of the nature of their God, and in a mingled feeling of jealous honour for that God and watchful anxiety for the souls committed to her charge, supplies this prayer; in the words of which declaration is made, fully and unreservedly, that the very necessities we have been making mention of before Him,

He already knoweth; and even knew before we asked: and, further, that since He knoweth them better than we know them ourselves, our ignorance in asking is known to Him. Yet have we prayed. And meet and right it is that we should by prayer make our wants known unto Him; for is it not this same all-present, omniscient, and heart-searching God, who himself demands, that if we would receive, we must *ask*? True it is, every gift from Him is of grace; "Yet, for this," saith He by his Spirit, "Yet for this will I be *inquired* of by thee[1]." Thus does the Church train her sons to a faith without wavering; to a hope without presumption. We confess, that infirmity stamps even this our holy offering of prayer and supplication and praise; and we throw ourselves upon the tender compassion of our God, to pardon this and all infirmities, and compensate our ignorance by that wisdom of which He is himself the inexhaustible fountain. Here, too, we avow, in proof of infirmity, that as courage failed us to pray for some blessings, and ignorance of the soul's real wants precluded the possibility of praying for others, so our whole trust and confidence is, that in his unwearying mercy, He will accept the perfections of another on our behalf, and that even "those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask, He will vouchsafe to give us, for the worthiness of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord."

[1] Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

SIXTH COLLECT.

"Almighty God! who hast promised . . through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Our holy trust and confidence in God having been refreshed and renewed by the considerations which the former collect suggested, we the more boldly appeal to the plighted *word* of Almighty God, that He would hear and answer our petition. We state his own promises, declared by the Son, as from the Father. "*Whatsoever* ye ask the Father, in my name, He will give it you." "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full [1]." Can language be more explicit? Come, therefore, in reliance upon these promises, as gracious as they are glorious: glorious, for they give us all the privileges of sonship; gracious, for we are not worthy of them—we beseech Him to hear us "*mercifully*." Mercy is still our cry. What, though we do that which is commanded! we are, after all, but unprofitable servants; and if our service be accepted of our heavenly Lord and Father, it owes its acceptance to his love and compassion; to his pity, for Jesus' sake, upon the fallen and unworthy. Here, however, we are reminded that "some ask and receive not [2]." "They ask not aright." It is only, "if we ask according to his will," that God heareth us [3]; and what that Will is, the Scriptures so plainly declare, that none fail of knowing it, except the wilfully ignorant. The Church rejoices, because "*His* will is our salvation." The aim of our prayer, then, is, to be set forward in the work of securing that salvation: for it is the one thing

[1] John xv. 11, and xvi. 14. [2] James iv. 3. [3] 1 John v. 14.

needful. And further, our prayers must be offered up not only with this object, but with an earnest and sincere desire to attain it: they must be offered up "*faithfully*." We must really mean what we say: the heart must feel what the lips utter. In a matter so weighty, we must neither deceive ourselves nor mock our God. Faithfulness must stamp our prayer. But if prayer be *thus* offered—in the name of the Son of God, and agreeably to the truth of the Spirit of God—who shall doubt but that it will "effectually be obtained," and its twofold object be gained? "Our necessity—though we be by nature sinful and weak and ignorant and unworthy—will of grace "be relieved," and "the glory of our God be set forth" before men; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

THE BLESSING.

"The peace of God . . . . . and remain with you alway [1]."

THE devout communicants being now warmed with fresh zeal in the service of God and of his Christ;

[1] This form of blessing is most truly and eminently scriptural; embracing the various forms scattered in different parts of holy writ. "On this wise,"—saith the Lord to Moses, speaking in the name of the Holy Trinity, *three* times declaring blessing from Jehovah,—"on this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, *The Lord* bless thee and keep thee; *the Lord* make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; *the Lord* lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace*."—As God *the Father* there left *his* blessing, so God *the Son*, sympathizing with the afflicted hearts of his faithful disciples, saddened as they were in the prospect of his removal from them, left on record his promise, and blesses us

* Numbers vi. 24.

their minds girded up by prayer with high resolve, as soldiers of the cross, to fight manfully under the banner of Christ against sin, the world, and the devil[1]; the Church dismisses them with a blessing, which thrills *every* heart; and which, as including their loved children, can never be heard by *parents* without feelings of the liveliest love, and joy, and gratitude. This peace is for them—for *them*, in whose welfare ever lies a Parent's highest interest. How can parents not love God, who vouchsafes to their children all his own sure and holy peace of mind[2]! How forbear to rejoice in knowing that, through the sacrifice they have now commemorated, to their children is a serenity which the world can neither give, nor take away! How withhold the most ardent gratitude to the Giver of this happy

and is *gracious* unto us: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*."—As God the Father and God the Son vouchsafe blessing, *so* is blessing vouchsafed also by God the *Holy Ghost*, who secures to us a continuance of this heavenly peace; for, with this special object in view, *He* is to abide with us *for ever*†.—Hence the apostle, strong in faith, and glowing with all his characteristic ardour of feeling and energy of expression, bids his dear Philippians, to cast from them all overweening care for things of this world, and "in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to let their requests be made known unto *God*;" for then he argues, "the *peace* of God which *passeth* all *understanding*"—it is given by the Spirit of God!—"shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus‡."

[1] At the holy communion we do in fact renew from time to time both the obligation and the privileges of our baptismal covenant.

[2] Parents know, from their own experience, that to trust for peace to the world, is indeed to lean upon a broken reed.

---

* John xiv. 27. † John xiv. 16. ‡ Phil. iv. 7.

calm, which is as far beyond their understanding to comprehend, as heaven is higher than earth! O who shall tell its power to stay the mind amid the tumult of temptations and struggles in this stormy world[1]! who duly estimate its influence in nerving the heart to duty, and sustaining its allegiance to its Saviour and its God! With what ardent desire do you, a mother, catch the joyful sound, and echo its supplication from your heart, that to these dear ones may be so vouchsafed this holy peace and so continued to them, that it "keep their hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Is not this a transcript of your mother-feelings?

But as the Church receives us at first into her bosom in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so in the same great name she dismisses us, when again we leave her sheltering wing to mingle with the world. She pronounces upon her faithful children "the blessing of God Almighty; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; to be amongst them, and remain with them always—" the Father blessing them by the goodness of his providence; keeping them in *all* their ways, both in their going out and in their coming in—the Son blessing them by the power of his word and the benefits of his intercession; guiding them into the way of peace, and making that their prayers reach even to the mercy seat—the Holy Ghost blessing them, by sanctifying their thoughts, giving wisdom to their words, ordering aright their actions, comfort-

[1] Agreeably to the majestic and illustrative language of sacred poetry, this peace it is, by which God "stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind." Is. xxvii. 8.

ing them in their sorrows; and in this his gracious office abiding with them for ever!

Mother!—if thou who now readest these pages art a mother—be thy state in this life what it may, the highest or the lowest; can thy mother's heart dream of aught better worth for which to pray on thy child's behalf than *this*, the *peace of God?* Remember its value—it alone can bring peace at *the last.*

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY.

THE OPENING ADDRESS.

THE object of this little work being to render what help it may towards the better understanding, and more fully appreciating the value of the *occasional services* of our Church, pointing out the admirable manner in which they are calculated to lead the mind aright on the particular occasions for which they are severally prepared; my task is rendered easier by the peculiar tone and temper which pervade those services, and the unassuming spirit in which the Church offers them for our adoption. It is evident throughout, that whilst she would enforce upon others the doctrines which she herself holds, and which, being invested with authority thereto, she calmly but firmly declares to be the truth as it is in Christ Jesus; she is guiltless of presumption. Do any reject her view of God's word and will? she laments that rejection; but she is in charity with all. If, with respect to the ordinance of marriage, some prefer the colder and unedifying course of making it a civil contract only,

with them she interferes not; but she does in a truly Scriptural and noble manner meet the views, and sympathize with the feelings of those who are already in communion with her, and who, drawing their views of duty in this world and their hopes of happiness in the next from the same eternal source with herself, even the word of God, gladly receive the guidance and sustaining help, she so affectionately offers [1]. In addressing them, she takes for granted evangelical principles, and strives to confirm them—she presupposes the feeling, and lends her aid to regulate it. As she would ever cheer the season of sorrow, so would she sanctify the hour of joy.

Under this view of our Church and her occasional services, we will proceed to point out the affecting tone of holy instruction and holy comfort, which the service appointed for the solemnization of matrimony would in a special manner seem to afford. The sanctity with which it invests the ordinance, the solemn invocation of Heaven's blessing upon it, the impressive warning it contains against whatever might weaken the bond into which the married parties enter, the earnest supplication for the eternal as well as temporal welfare of husband and wife, the avowal that all is done as in the immediate presence of that "God, before whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets can be hid—" these characteristics combine to give it a value and an interest all its own.

Few there are, however warmly attached to each

[1] God might have peopled this new made world at once. Why He did not so do, is not for us to enquire: that He willed differently we have only to admire and adore, as we read in his holy word, what was the ordering of his dispensations.

other by similarity of mind and disposition and affections—very few there are, who contemplate the marriage state without occasional anticipations of anxiety as to the added cares and responsibilities which in the common ordering of God's providence must attend it. But the minds of those most sensitive to this anxious view of human life, are at once encouraged by the considerations to which the Marriage Service at its very commencement leads them. They are reminded of its high original. "Marriage,"—that estate into which the man and the woman are now about to enter—is an honourable estate, instituted of *God* in the time of man's innocency. And is there a care which a sense of God's superintending providence cannot lighten? is there a fear, which an assurance of his present help may not remove? Is there a joy, which the light of his countenance does not sanctify and brighten? When the mind is thus impressed with the salutary conviction that marriage is therefore a religious ordinance, and to be entered upon with a holy reverence towards God, every low unworthy thought is removed; their hearts turn to Him; and their fervent prayer is, that the blessings they trust now to gain, may abide with them even to their lives' end. To impress the occasion with a still deeper solemnity, we are also reminded, that under the comparison of the marriage state "is signified unto us the mystical union which is betwixt Christ and his Church"—He, the bridegroom; the Church, the bride [1]. A view this of the ordinance

[1] The parable is narrated with a clear reference to the festive character, which according to the worldly means of the parties, was wont to grace Jewish marriages; and whilst it intimates in no mere slight and shadowy manner the sanctity of marriage itself, more than

of marriage, which invests it with a high and heavenly character; stamping it at once a religious as well as a civil contract; and evincing the uniform care of our Church in training her sons to heed the Apostolic injunction, that they "do all to the glory of God," and with a reference eventually to promote *his* honour. Thus the service in the course of this address proceeds to warn us of the new responsibilities to which we may expect to be called, when as parents it will be our's to "bring up children in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy name:" holding forth thus a salutary intimation that we hereby pledge ourselves to a fulfilment, before our God, of those coming duties, in which we trust to have his blessing. Yet no austerity mingles with this holy feeling. That marriage is to be held also an occasion of joy, we learn not only from the general tenor of Scripture, but from the memorable instance recorded of our blessed Lord, who Himself worked a miracle to brighten the hour of joy at a marriage feast, where "Jesus and his disciples, and his mother," were among the guests. Did not his very presence more than sanction the display of festive hospitality which marked the occasion? Did it not sanctify the feast? Did it not, with sufficient clearness and force, though by inference, leave this instructive lesson, that at the ordinance itself, Jesus would ever be spiritually present, if invited thereto —so to speak, — the sanctions of his gospel never be wanting at the marriage of his disciples? Indeed these very facts—that marriage was ordained of God; that reference to the ordinance is used by Jesus Christ

justifies a Christian nation, in not severing a religious from the civil view of the ordinance.

Himself, to illustrate the spiritual unity which is betwixt Him and his Church; and that He adorned and beautified that estate with his presence, and by miracle —these facts throw around the ordinance of marriage a holy authority, which the Church would, with all a mother's love, impress deeply on the hearts of her children; not less for their consolation, than for their instruction. The close of the address reminds each party in a very affecting manner, that as together they are entering life upon their own responsibility,—the one no longer to look for a father's guidance, and support, and counsel; the other no longer to find safety and protection from a mother's sheltering wing—so each must remember that the holy estate of marriage was ordained "for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other in prosperity and adversity." Note the wise firmness and honesty with which our Church, whilst she holds the occasion to be one of festive joy duly regulated, paints the future, as experience will show it, mingled with sorrow as with joy; marked alternately with adversity and prosperity; calling from loving hearts sympathy in sorrow, as well as participation in joy. Thus effectually does she lend her ready aid to cement that sacred bond of society, which heaven at man's first creation ordained, and the sanctity and happiness of which our blessed Lord Himself, when He dwelt among his creatures, enforced and blessed[1]. Never has it been disregarded by nations or individuals without ruin to their welfare and their peace. Suppose it broken, where are the ties of relationship? Brother, sister, kindred—what is to unite them in love and

[1] Matt. xix. 4—6.

peace? How can the pure lineage of families be preserved? How are the dreadful results of doubt and indifference to be avoided? Whereas a due observance of it, whilst it promotes purity of heart, prompts to every high and generous feeling, and expands every noble sentiment in the individual, is one of the surest pledges for social honour. Not only do the closer ties of near relationship and the tender affections of kindred, spring directly from this source; but the various charities of the heart which in their exercise tend to meliorate human life; and which, though quiet in their operation, are continually operative for the good of social order, domestic peace, and individual happiness; all these, as they pervade the frame of society, emanate more or less directly, from the salutary, though reflected, influence of the marriage bond. Besides, how often—such is the sad truth when man is viewed only as a fallen creature—how often, but for the sanctity thus investing marriage, would the bond, entered into from haste or passion, be broken by caprice; and the mother in her weakness, and the child in its helplessness, be thrown for support on the casual bounty of a world to which they are strangers? Does society owe nothing to an ordinance which thus solemnly compels individuals to provide for their own—forbidding to neglect, on any plea, wife or children; enlisting conscience on the side of the weak and helpless; holding every man to the obligation he has fixed upon himself in the sight of the Almighty; and allowing to none, that caprices of temper, or differences in tastes, or, if it so happen, change of fortune and circumstances, can be ground for neglecting duties to

which they were severally pledged at the altar of their God—sacredly and irrevocably!

To the individuals themselves, the sanctity of the marriage bond bears extended blessing—even the blessing of Him who ordained it. Happy they, whose dispositions and views so harmonize, that no jarring disturbs their concord, but having the same enjoyments as they have the same interests, pass through life loving and well loved:" "dwelling together in holy love unto their life's end." Or even where there may not be complete similarity of disposition, still their holy vow reminds them to bear and forbear; each to yield something of their own will for the other's sake; neither of them being "bitter" against the other; but both of them forbearing in love, "that their prayers be not hindered." Specially must they abate nothing of that affection which they felt when their marriage vow passed between them, and which, if cherished as unto God, who witnessed the dedication of it, will by Him be blessed to the preservation of peace and comfort even to the end; and the hearts thus united here in mutual love, in the sight of God, and delighting to serve Him together in this world, may then look to their reunion in the world of spirits; there to serve Him together for ever.

Others too there are, whose hearts find in the sanctity of the marriage vow, a peace which the world could never give—hearts which amid all the joy which does and ought to brighten the occasion, often sink with sadness: a sadness not less deep because concealed. Parents must love the society of children, who from birth have been their delight and solace;

nor, such is the nature of things, do they ever prize it more, than when about to lose it—this severing of companionship but drawing closer their bond of affection. When, therefore, the fond father and mother say farewell to the duteous daughter of their love, how often is the smile, lighted up for a moment by the reflected happiness of others, followed by tears, as soon as, the parting past, those tears can flow unrestrained, since no longer giving pain to the object which caused them. At that moment how soothing the reflection, that by every holy consideration, the power of which a solemn appeal to Heaven has sealed, there is secured to the dear absent one, under all the changes and chances of this mortal life, the affection of one, who has pledged himself to love and to cherish her, as a second self, till death do part them. The pledge has been given publicly before men, and solemnly in the house and presence of the Almighty; avowing responsibility to God, not in this life only, but in that which is to come; even at the final judgment. The very words of the Service, in all their sacred force, are well remembered; reminding us that as the Divine blessing rests on an ordinance appointed of heaven, even father and mother may rejoice to part with their children, when they enter upon that holy ordinance with mutual love, and live unto the Lord. But the Church veils not the truth; neither does she allow it to deter the Christian mind from meeting it. Hers is the nobler work to brace the mind for whatever changes and chances life may bring to husband and wife; and this she does by instructing them, that the sympathy of faithful Christian hearts, whose love

holy marriage has sanctified, doth so soothe all cares, that the share which each bears is not felt to be a burden, because it is borne for others' sake; whilst in reference to the blessings of life—to share them, is twofold to enjoy them.

THE CHARGE.

As mankind increased upon the face of the earth, it pleased the Almighty to prohibit alliance by marriage between those of near kindred. The laws of our own land, founded as they are upon the laws of God and in conformity thereto, exhibit the same prohibitions. The parties, therefore, who present themselves for marriage, are charged severally, to consider well whether there be any lawful impediment to their union: whether there be any previous marriage, or any such consanguinity or affinity as are forbidden—or, in case of minors, any disapproval of parents or guardians: and the charge is given in terms of awful import; appealing to the all-present, though invisible God, "to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid;" that *He* be witness to the contract, whether or no it be according to his word. The man and the woman are each reminded, that if they themselves know any impediment, of which they keep their fellow-creatures in ignorance, they cannot conceal it from God. Man may be deceived by man; and the Church may be so misled by false representations, as that she admit to marriage those against whose union there still really exist lawful impediments. Duplicity is too often an overmatch for honour, cunning

for honesty, and worldliness for piety[1]. To God, therefore, the Church appeals, not only as the eternal Father of spirits, to whom alone are known the secrets of the heart, and its real designs, but as the awful Being who will hereafter judge every man according as his works have been. The parties are expected to think *now*, how they will be able to answer *then*. One can hardly imagine an injunction attended by a more heart-stirring and awakening consideration! With strict truth, therefore, is it here declared of all marriages undertaken within the forbidden rules, that those so married, "are not joined together by God"—the sanction *of his* word wanting; and the blessing of his favour thrown aside—"neither is their matrimony lawful."

The warning is given thus early in the service, that both the man and the woman may have opportunity to forbear the sin of unlawful marriage, if such be contemplated by them.

THE CONSENT OF PARTIES.

Thus warned, the parties are required to declare explicitly their own consent: because the want of consent on their part would render the marriage invalid. Moreover, to prevent any future misunderstanding with respect to the measure about to have their consent, the *conditions* of it are stated, fully and distinctly. —Will they severally receive, either the other; the

[1] That children of the world are in their generation wiser than the children of light—we know from a higher authority than man's wisdom. Luke xvi. 8.

one, the woman as his wedded wife; the other, the man as her wedded husband; and so "live together after God's ordinance;" not as occasional but *continual* companions, "so long as they both shall live?" Will they love, each the other; and find their own best happiness in striving to secure the happiness of the other? Will they, in the same spirit, comfort each other; and whatever sorrows and vexations meet them from the world, rejoice that one earthly friend is theirs, in whose sympathy and tender affection they are sure of consolation and repose? Will they thus mutually honour each other; bearing with each other's infirmities; "each esteeming other better than themthemselves[1]?" Will they keep each other "in sickness and in health?" Will they never weary of these kind offices, but engage in them equally during the trying seasons of adversity and sorrow, and the bright days of prosperity and joy? With hearts and minds thus united, will they keep them each only to the other, through life? — Where these conditions are duly kept, experience alone can tell the power of united affection in aiding us to rise above adversity, and to keep a safe course in prosperity. True! the time of man's innocency it cannot restore; but next to the union betwixt Christ and the soul, it is the most powerful helper towards such a conversation on

[1] Few points of character in married persons more readily win the respect and esteem of mankind, than the mutual respect and esteem, in which they are themselves seen to hold each other. Whereas, relatives, friends, and neighbours, soon withhold that respect, if they find it laid aside by the parties themselves. It is, therefore, of great importance even to social life, as well as to the family circle, that husband and wife show to *each other* all Christian *honour*.

earth as may forward us on our way to heaven. The constant exercise of all the tender affections, sanctified by God's ordinance; the unselfishness, which none but bad hearts can lay aside; the sustaining and cheering consciousness, that whatever injustice or injury or neglect we may experience from the *world*, at *home* are hearts devoted to our best interests in time and in eternity; hearts where glows a love, which not even our failings can extinguish, or our adversity cloud; nay, the very duty of bearing mutually with infirmities of temper and disposition, which must, in a greater or less degree, ever attach to the best of fallen creatures like ourselves—these all combine to throw around the marriage state a holy character, which it is the object of our Church in this service to confirm and preserve. Readily, therefore, and happily, may each party answer "*I will.*"

Thus far the conditions proposed to both the man and the woman are the same. But other questions are superadded to the woman. She is further asked; "Will she obey her husband and serve him?" In this, as throughout all her services, it is evident that our Church is guided entirely by the word of God; and in this case she does but give another proof of her wise and salutary care in impressing upon the minds of the parties about to enter upon marriage, that they never lose sight of that state, as *an ordinance of God*. Eve was created as an help meet for Adam—the very term implying a certain degree of superiority in Adam. After the fall this distinction was marked still more decidedly—"Thy desire shall be to thy husband," said God to the woman; "and he shall rule over thee." To the extent of this superiority it is, and no

further, that the woman vows obedience. But to this the Church reminds her she is bound, and therefore requires a voluntary avowal from her own lips; accompanied as it is to be, with all the solemnity of a vow heard and registered in heaven; that she will not only "love her husband, comfort him, honour and keep him in sickness and in health, and forsaking all other, keep her only unto him, so long as they both shall live"—but that she "will obey him and serve him." This vow she makes, when pronouncing the irrevocable "I WILL."

But who sees not the wisdom of this ordering! Who perceives not, that it is at once the strongest possible guard against the evil of contention, which, in fallen creatures like ourselves, would be for ever at work, if parties were so equal that no obligation lay on either to yield to the other? The principle laid down in the word of God upon this point, enables both the man and the woman to avoid that struggling for the mastery, which is the bane of *all* social life, and which in *married* life embitters the sweetest cup which a gracious Providence may proffer to us. Where contention is in families, there peace is forfeited, respectability hazarded, temper vitiated; virtues themselves there wither, for how can the spirit of peace flourish where discord rages[1]? But where a family are regulated according to God's ordinance, all such evils are avoided. The wife feels no degradation in submitting to the judgment and wishes of the husband—she is but obeying a still higher authority. Even

[1] A divided house, like a divided kingdom, cannot stand. So said the Lord. Matt. xii. 25.

where much self-denial must be exercised in such obedience, rich is her secret reward, in the conscious feeling that "she is doing God's will." Whilst the husband is careful to exercise this delegated superiority, as one who must give account thereof—knowing it is to be exercised gently, and with a view always the more to promote the honour of his heavenly Father, and the eternal as well as temporal welfare of wife and children committed to his care. If thus the husband has added power, heavy indeed is his added responsibility; so heavy, that however sometimes a wife's obedience may bring severe trials of temper and patience and comfort to herself, the responsibility of the husband brings weightier cares still. The wife in her obedience must be right: God has so willed. The husband, in the extent to which he exercises his authority, may be wrong.

Happy they, who loving each other above the world, but loving God with a higher and holier affection still, each taking *his word* as their guide, and seeking *his Spirit* as their strength, find that they have the same wishes, the same hopes, the same view of duty, the same sources of enjoyment; or, if ever such variance of opinion occur, as must occasionally arise between any two minds, yet in their one great aim, as immortal beings—so to pass through things temporal that they lose not finally the things eternal—in *that* aim, all lower shades of difference fade away. There is no hesitation on the one side, in waving authority respecting matters of indifference—on the other, no difficulty in yielding to it, when enforced. In things of high import, their souls are one.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

PLIGHTING THE TROTH.

The part of the service next following has a peculiarly affecting character. A father, or some near and dear friend, his representative, gives his daughter to the betrothed husband; transferring to him that unwearied watchful care, that tender protection, that support and comfort, which from her infancy had been his delight and his care. The past, with all its recollections of bright and happy years, rises up, and will force itself in contrast with future years, will mingle with feelings of unrestrained anxiety, as he hears the heart-stirring question—"Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?"—None but parents can feel in their full weight, the force of these words. The child, so long cherished under the wing of fondest love, is about to leave its shelter; to enter upon new scenes; be engaged in new duties; surrounded by new cares; and have another object than her parents, to promote whose best interests and happiness, her time and thoughts, her fears and her hopes, are now to be directed, and in whom her devoted love must henceforth centre. But what if thus between parent and child, companionship be gone? What if to a worldly eye the future seems one cloudy sky of cheerless and unbroken gloom?—the word of God, which is ever our light and our joy, is seen here, like the rainbow token, then the brightest when all around is dark. The union of man and wife is according to *God's* holy ordinance; so this parting of parent and

child is in obedience to God's command—and obedience to *Him*, must bring *blessing*. Father and mother must be forsaken, when this holy ordinance unites their children to still dearer companions in life's varied journey. Thus you feel the pain of this severing to be soothed; and the memory of past years, marked as it is by the good providence and grace of God, in having enabled you to supply your child with all things necessary, as well for the body as the soul; training her up "in the way wherein she should go"—the memory of these things confirms your faith and brightens your hope for the future. The great Being, who watched over her when blessed with the parent's care, will still watch over her with unslumbering eye, now blessed with a husband's love.

Such is naturally the sustaining effect of viewing this service, not merely as a civil, but also as a religious rite—a state, entered into as before God, as well as before man; the contracting parties making themselves responsible to the Almighty Judge of all for a due fulfilment of their vows. They accordingly, in the most touching manner, before Almighty God and the congregation who may be assembled, plight their troth, either to other, by a declaration which the Church records most fully and affectingly, and in that noble spirit of truth and courage which is so eminently characteristic of Christian principle. Even in this joyous hour, however, the Church veils not the real nature of human life: she allows it to be full of changes and chances; whilst man, born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, is continually exposed to them[1].

[1] The reader will find an explanatory note upon this subject—p. 384.

The man and the woman therefore, each "pledge to other their troth, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse;" no change of circumstances to change their mutual love; their union being for mutual support in adversity, as for mutual comfort in prosperity[1]—"for richer for poorer;" neither hus-

[1] It is in a spirit of true wisdom that the Church warns the newly married, even in this their bright hour of joy, to remember what human life is—not only a state of continual change, but a state in which man is born to trouble. Consequently they will consider their state highly favoured, when intervals of ease are vouchsafed; when the passing change is for the better, and the inheritor of trouble can for a time wave his inheritance. This just view of human life, whilst it prepares them to meet with faith and patience such trials as may await them, becomes at once a powerful and sustaining motive for cherishing, enduringly and with a deeper and holier feeling of responsibility to the God before whom they have vowed their vow, that mutual love, which is intended by a merciful Providence to strengthen, as cares assail it; and be possessed as a treasure, the more prized as other possessions fail. Happen what will to those who hold this view of life, there is always comfort *at home*, which no earthly changes can take away. One there is, into whose faithful kind bosom the afflicted can pour all their sorrows, all their woes; and fear no cold rejection of their appeal. Hearts, where sympathy thus reigns, and where love to each other is only less fervent than love to God, soon rise superior to outward circumstances. Poverty excites no murmur, and sickness no complaining. Even oppression ceases to pain, or contempt to wound. The holy vows, registered before heaven and kept before men, bring their own rich recompense of reward in a mutual love which, by God's grace, overcomes the world, its sorrows, and its pains. Nor can a nobler testimony be given to the power of this love, thus blessed of God, than when husband and wife, with perhaps fallen fortunes and hopeless as to this world's goods, meet the change "from richer to poorer, from better to worse," with a brave and unsubdued heart; each to the other a friend, whose love many waters, even the waters of affliction, cannot quench: nay, whose love grows firmer as weighty sorrows press it, and brighter as clouds of misery darken round it. View them with their children, trained to the same elevated tone of feeling, then most perfect, when submitting to God's

band nor wife to murmur at the other, if the prospect of competence and ease with which they began life, be clouded; and their closing days be darkened by poverty and distress—"in sickness and in health;" then most loving, when the weakening body and the fainting spirit clings with fonder affection to the husband or wife, for whose sake have been left father and mother; and in whose tenderness and care now rests their chief earthly trust—"to love and to cherish" under every variety of circumstances, and in the unfiring spirit of devoted affection, even "till death do part them." With what more than almost human strength the gentle frame of woman will then tend the husband, the bright wakefulness with which she will keep the night-watches around the bed of hopeless sickness and approaching death—shrinking not from the loved one, even when the King of terrors strikes his victim: how bravely she then redeems the pledge, made in the bright hour of her espousals—experience is in ample proof, from the cottage to the throne.

The state was entered upon according to God's holy ordinance—it closes under God's blessing.

THE RING.

The pledge of the *heart* having been given, there is added a *visible* pledge—a ring; which is to be placed

will; then most after the pattern of Christ, when submitting to that will joyfully; view them in their poverty; it may be, even in their penury! Yet will they be to each other faithful and loving unto death; trusting that the God who heard their vows, when in youth and joy they plighted to each other their troth before his altar, will now hear their prayers, as they fulfil their vows, in age and sickness and sorrow. *He* will bless and keep them still.

by the man upon the fourth finger of the woman's left hand, and is there to remain during life. The ring thus given, both in its form and in the material of which it is usually made, is alike significant: gold being a fit emblem of the purity of a love which no unworthy views alloy; and of the enduring nature of an affection which frequency of trial shall but bring out of the furnace, brighter and of higher value: whilst the circle, emblem of that which endeth not, well indicates that till life shall close, the circle of duties now entered upon is to cease not. Still holding this ring upon the finger where he placed it, the man declares that he thus weds the object of his affections in a spirit of pure and unchangeable love. Whatever honour may accrue to himself from his state of life, from his wealth, power, learning, or other acquisitions, he devotedly transfers to her; "with my body I thee worship[1];" so whatever other worldly

[1] It frequently happens in reading the Holy Scriptures, that we find expressions, which from a change in the fashion of language, would seem to bear a different meaning to that which the context can justify. In such cases we must ascertain what was the meaning of the word, when first it was adopted into our translation of God's word. In like manner in our Liturgy, several terms are still used, which from age have changed their former acceptation, and no longer convey their original meaning. Thus no devotion is intended by the term—"with my body I thee worship." The word *worship* meant, in older times, *regard, respect, honour*. Of this there is a striking proof in our translation of 1 Sam. ii. 30. In our present translation it stands, "him that honours me, I will honour:" whereas in the earlier translation, the same passage stood, "him that worships me, I will worship." Each word is correct according to the power of our language at the several times in which either was adopted. God will make honourable or worshipful among their fellow-creatures those who give honour unto Him. In the same sense the words used by our translators, Luke xiv. 10. "Then shalt thou have worship in

advantages may accrue to him, he fully and freely shares with her, giving her the full enjoyment of all things which he possesses—"with all my worldly goods I thee endow." And this avowal is made under the most solemn obligation; "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Is it asked, why the Church upon this occasion requires the ordinance to be sealed in the awful "name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?" the answer is found, first in the Apostolic injunction, which never should be forgotten by us, that "*whatever* we do," all should be done "to the glory of God;" in acknowledgment as well of his grace as of his providence: and secondly, in the truth, that by that name emphatically is known the *Christian's* God. In that holy name at Baptism we all entered into covenant with God; in the same holy name we have from time to time confirmed that covenant; and we daily close our prayers with an invocation for blessing, from the grace of the Saviour, the love of the Father, the fellowship of the Comforter—none other name enabling us to triumph over our sorrows: none other name sanctifying our joys.

the presence of them that sit at meat with thee"—limiting the expression of reverence to some ordinary mark of honour and respect. So is the word to be understood in the present service.

It is important for the young Christian always to bear in mind this view of the changes to which language is liable with the change of time. It will often help to remove doubts, which some cold-hearted caviller may suggest, or clear up difficulties which may for a time cause perplexity in the mind of the simple and unlearned reader. Refer to the note in page 210.

THE PRAYER.

"O eternal God . . . through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In this prayer God is addressed as the unchangeable Jehovah; the same, yesterday, to day, and for ever; eternal. He is our Creator; the author of our existence, soul and body. He by his power continues this our existence, spiritually and temporally; the preserver of all men, and the giver of all spiritual grace. Further, this his care endureth even to the end; for He is the author of *everlasting* life. He is the God whom the Church earnestly implores in the fulness of his eternity, to give the newly-married the blessing of his grace, that with hearts united to Him in holy reverence, they may be the more closely united to each other in holy love; and so, sanctified and blessed, may, like Isaac and Rebecca, be patterns of conjugal affection, and finding each in the other all happiness which this world can bestow, faithfully keep only "each unto the other so long as they both shall live;" the ring being a true emblem of that unbroken circle of duty and affection, in which they will live according to God's laws through Jesus Christ our Lord. Upon these grounds it is that the Church, in the exercise of the authority delegated to her, pronounces blessing in God's name. Wisely too are the married warned in this their hour of joy, that next to God they must look to themselves for their only sure comfort in a world on whose changes they are about to enter; sharers alike of its sorrows and its joys. Here, experience is in proof, that when man and wife, wisely cherishing the love of their youth, continue to live to God and to each other, many and severe may be

their trials; their bright worldly prospects may dim; their high raised hopes may end in disappointment; and from their home, as the tempest-tost from his labouring bark, they may see around them only the angry waves of this troublous world: but that home is their safety; the anchor of their hope is the love of their God; and, true to Him and to each other, leaving the world to its own vain tumult, they "remain in perfect love and peace together;" and so ride safe above the water-flood, till they together reach that shore, where, as they humbly trust, they may meet safe and for ever happy in the promised haven of their rest—even the bosom of their God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE SACRED BOND.

"Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

Cold must be the hearts, alike insensible to the awakening feeling of the more immediate presence of Almighty God before whom they are assembled, and indifferent to the best interests of those on whom the Church has with prayer and supplication been invoking blessing; cold indeed must they be, upon whom the words of warning now read—the words of Jesus Christ himself—fall unheeded [1]. Concise but impressive; admonitory but comforting; to what musings do they give rise! "Is it, indeed, *God* who hath joined together this man and this woman? Where is he that shall dare put them asunder? or where are they who shall doubt His blessing upon them? If the covenant be

[1] Matt. xix. 6.

irreversible; the bond indissoluble, save by death; still it is of *God's* ordering; and all which is *so* ordered, *must* be ordered *aright*." Thus then, thou tender mother, grieve not to part with thy beloved daughter. Be comforted by remembering that you have committed her to the care of that God, according to whose ordering your companionship is for a time severed. But thought knows no severing. You and she, though far distant perhaps, can unite your mutual prayers; and your spirits may so meet in loved and heavenly communing. Such united supplications to the Being who sanctified the parting, leave you no vain hope, that his gracious blessing, then invoked by the Church upon her parents and herself and her husband, will abide upon you and them, even to the end. She is united in *holy* wedlock; and that union death alone can sever.

THE BOND RATIFIED BY THE CHURCH.

"Forasmuch as . . . in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The ordinance of marriage thus being of God, and having been now entered upon with a devout and holy service, in acknowledgment that to *Him* his servants look for blessing upon their union, the Church ratifies the bond; and after declaring marriage to be a hallowed religious ordinance, states that in the present instance it has been confirmed by mutual consent, and by a mutual sacred vow made in the presence of God, as well as before the assembled congregation. She repeats also, that in token and pledge of the parties considering their vow binding, and to be through life unbroken, a ring had been given and received; fit

emblem of pure and never-ending love. Further, she reminds the assembled congregation, that there had been "a joining of hands;" in token that henceforth man and wife were to be one. These things being so, the minister, by the authority vested in him as an appointed servant of the Most High, pronounces of the married pair that "they be man and wife together; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost[1]."

THE BLESSING.

"God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost . . . . life everlasting."

THE bond of marriage having been sealed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, the *blessing* invoked upon parties so united is very appropriately conveyed in the *same* great *name* of "God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost" — Preserver, Redeemer, Comforter; the Christian's God. There is an affecting solemnity in these words of blessing, which none could ever hear unmoved. How fervently it must be responded to by congregated friends and relatives generally, we can well understand; though it were less easy to judge how fully your own heart, as a mother, or the heart of a father feels its force! Yet how soothing must be the reflection, that when children are thus placed more immediately under the sheltering wing of a present God, and with fervent prayer committed to his protection, they are safe and happy under the guidance and love of a Father who is in heaven. If *He* "mercifully look

[1] Refer to page 385.

upon them; if *He* fill them "with all spiritual benediction and grace," then is the hope well founded that "their weakness being perfected in his strength," they may in a Christian spirit of mutual love, as they contemplate each other's excellences; and of mutual forbearance, as they see and lament each other's infirmities; so live together in this life, guiltless of unkindly tempers and dispositions towards each other, that in the world to come they may together have life everlasting. If *that* be gained—and in gaining it, each, through God's spiritual benediction and grace blessing them, may assist the other by the gentle but effective influence of a Christian example—if *that* life be gained, *then*, of how little moment will it be, what cares or troubles or disappointments have compassed them in the passing scenes of this world!—Their gain is life eternal.

THE PSALMS.

Psalm cxxviii.

"Blessed are all they . . . . peace upon Israel."

Marriage is peculiarly and properly an occasion of heartfelt joy. Therefore it was, that the holy Jesus "adorned and beautified that estate with his presence;" and further did promote the joyousness of the festival by a miracle. Hence psalms of praise and thanksgiving, as well as prayers and supplications, are added to this service[1]. The first of the two Psalms recounts the blessings promised of Heaven to those who when married live in the fear and love of the Lord, and "walk in his ways." God will bless their honest industry in providing for the necessities

[1] James v. 13.

and comforts of their new state of life. The wife shall be a happy mother of children, to the delight of herself and her husband; whilst the children, like branches of the olive stem, shall flourish, the defence at once and the ornament of their parents. Nay, thus too shall they enjoy the inestimable privilege of themselves serving the Lord in all godly quietness, and seeing the Church of Christ "in prosperity all their life long;" with no vain hope that when children are vouchsafed them, their posterity also may in their time enjoy the same. "Such honour have all his saints."

O! what motive here to parents, that themselves lead a truly religious life, and train their children to the same! True it is, that children bring many cares; but where the law of God is their guide, blessing attends the possession of them. Nay, where they prove eventually trials, they may not therefore prove less blessings in the end: such is the ordering of God's providence and grace[1]. Even suppose a numerous family to bring added weight of care upon parents;

[1] Though no afflictions are more grievous to parents than those which arise from failure of good conduct in their children, yet faith teaches them to consider even those afflictions as trials sent to prove their trust in God, and discipline their own souls for heaven. The guilt of undutiful conduct in children remains the same; but the *effect* of it upon parents is not unmixed misery. In the midst of all their earthly sorrow, they find peace with God; for they meet the trial unrepiningly, as from Him. They bear in mind the short duration of the suffering, ending with this transitory life, and the eternity of its recompence through Christ. The triumphant language of the Apostle is at last, even *theirs*—"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

still the experience of life is in proof that their very numbers add to their blessing[1]. How readily and efficiently do they aid each other on their course! The elder, how often do they take a parent's part; the guides of the less experienced, the guardians of the more youthful! Where too are the Christian parents, who—as their eyes rest on the home scene, when around the table are clustering the olive branches, the gift of God—find not their hearts expand with undefinable joy, at the hopeful prospect which the Holy Scriptures open to them, that those branches, if duly cultivated by the word of God, nourished and fed by the healthful Spirit of his grace, and refreshed by the dew of his blessing in this wilderness of life, may grow and flourish also in the courts of the Lord's house here, and hereafter find their place in the heavenly Eden, in the midst whereof will be the tree of life! Or are these hopes nothing worth to refresh the faith of anxious parents under the pressure of care in "bringing up their children in the fear and nurture of the Lord?" Speak they no comfort amid the sad and varied trials of life? Bring they no recompense of reward to meet their oft self-denial, their secret unmurmuring sorrows, their heartfelt but unrevealed fears, their unwearying patience, their untiring love? You—if haply parents are now reading these pages—you can from your own hearts respond. Amid your family worship, as the young bright voices raise their prayer for "God's kingdom to come," and add their according "Amen!" "Even so, Lord Jesus"—such methinks is your own deep-felt supplication—

[1] Refer to pages 20—23.

"Even so, Lord Jesus! come quickly!" 'Come, in 'thy kingdom of glory; and grant, that we all who 'are now serving Thee, a family of faith here below, 'may one day with angels and archangels and all the 'company of heaven, serve Thee, a family of bliss 'and glory above; and serve Thee there, *for ever!*'

Psalm lxvii.

"God be merciful . . . . . shall fear him."

Though the subject of this and the preceding Psalm seems different; this latter appearing at first hardly sufficiently pointed to the occasion to be appropriate; there is yet between the two a most instructive relation and mutual dependence. In the first, various blessings, private and public, are enumerated, as gifts from God; the brightness of all, however, being eclipsed by that universal blessing—the prosperity of the Church, in which *all* the families of the earth are equally interested. And what higher privilege could parents pray for their children, than that they "should see Jerusalem in prosperity all their life long?" This second Psalm is therefore aptly introduced as a prayer for the accomplishment of this hope—that "the way of God and his saving health may be known among all nations." Nor can this glorious end be attained otherwise than by the exercise of his power, as supreme Moral Governor of the world; "governing the nations upon earth;" bending them to his purpose; so ordering their ways, that whilst they fondly dream to be doing their own will, they shall yet do his; and so controlling the designs of men, that *his* "counsel shall stand, and *he* do all his

good pleasure[1]." Then it is, that we and our children and our children's children may hope to live in all godly quietness; no overthrow of order in the state; no troublous changes and trials in the Church, the Zion which we love. To that happy time we look, when "God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing:" and we know that if "*God* bless us," *all* is *well*—individually and collectively; well in our own hearts, well in our families, well in our friendships, well in the nation of which we form a part—"all the ends of the world shall then fear Him:" and where "*His* fear is, there is wisdom."

THE PRAYERS AND SUPPLICATIONS.

After these hymns of praise, follow prayers and supplications. This is wisely so ordered, that the joy of heart on the glad occasion may be sanctified, and prove the more productive of a lively course of holiness. Indeed this part of the service is peculiarly affecting. The newly-married bending low on their knees at the altar before which they have made their vows, the minister implores the Divine mercy for them, for himself, and for the assembled congregation. They, in their turn, respond in the same supplicating strain, "Lord and Christ, have mercy upon us!" And that these mutual supplications may have the more favourable acceptance before the throne of grace, we at once approach with that form of words, which *He*, who willed that the honest heart should never pray in vain, did himself both teach us, and command us to offer.

[1] Isaiah xlvi. 10.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

HUSBAND and wife! familiar to you as this prayer has been from infancy, you now offer the several petitions of it with a new and closer interest. Hitherto, when you have uttered the words, "*Our Father which art in heaven*," you probably never forgot that in these terms you prayed for others as well as each for yourself; but at this hour, fresh feelings have opened in your heart, and you present your deep-felt prayer for one, a second-self; one, dearer to you than yourself; one, for whom to know that a *heavenly* Father's love is at hand, fills you with a peaceful serenity, a calm and holy joy, never felt before. "What, though, according to God's ordinance, I have left father and mother,"—so methinks whisper the tender thoughts of the loving and well-loved daughter: "yet is there the blessing of a *heavenly* Father, who will be, I pray, with them, even as with *us* now united in God's name. O! for ever "*hallowed be thy name!*"—O *heavenly* Father, what is that name? Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: and surely, under this view of the majesty of that name, it will be more and more honoured. Husband and wife may well hallow that name, in which their marriage-vow has been made; the name in which the marriage-blessing has been pronounced; the name in which the faithful believers of the Gospel glory; the name through which the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, is now the Christian's heritage[1]. Aforetime did the heart of each

[1] Pages 389 and 385.

warm with bright hope, as they prayed, O heavenly Father, "*thy kingdom come*;" thy kingdom here of grace, hereafter of glory? This hope glows brighter still, now that there is another, with whose interests for time and for eternity, in the means of grace as in the hope of glory, their own interests are as one, and for ever identified: sharing here the kingdom of peace, hereafter the kingdom of glory—peace more welcome thus enjoyed together; the hope more closely cherished, when a dearer self may share it. Among the many causes of every man's misery is the dominion in his heart of self-will; and so great is the variety of the human mind—differences of disposition, and temper, and pursuits, and views being infinite,—that there is no other sure way of regulating our wills, when in domestic life they strive for the mastery, than by at once doing the will of God. *That* must be a right, and safe, and happy course. How often too would our very obedience to *His* will, lead us cheerfully to yield our own to the will of another. In the individual and more close application therefore of the next petition, offered as it is by the newly married on bended knee before the altar of their God, with what added sincerity and holier resolve do they pray, "*Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*" Then it is, when God's will *is* done with the obedience of angels, that the peace of angels visiteth earth, and the Apostle's bold and stirring language is, without presumption, adopted; "our conversation is in heaven." What too, if with added anxious care, thought now be taken for the providing, daily and suitably, things necessary and according to the state of life to which God may have called them? The same bounti-

ful Father in heaven, which has supplied their wants hitherto, is ever at hand to vouchsafe a continuance of his bounty. In *Him* they trust. Though, therefore, another's comforts are now to be provided for, no such thought for the morrow is taken, as the word and Will of God forbid. There is still the same firm reliance upon the great Preserver of his creatures, that He will not withhold "food convenient for them," temporal or spiritual; there is still the same meek contentment with the extent of his bounty; still the same spirit of faith, as the heart breathes the lowly prayer of dependence and hope, "for all things necessary, as well for the body as the soul:" "*Give us, this day, our daily bread.*" The next petition, though it pass the lips of the suppliants, and they acknowledge offences before God which require forgiveness, would yet, as to its condition, seem hardly intelligible to hearts, themselves so happy, that at peace, not only with each other but with all the world, they feel to have nothing to forgive. But what if, here, all be calm? they must again embark upon the waves of this troublesome world; and it cannot happen but that *there*, offences will come, and the grace of forgiveness require to be exercised. Nay, even between the individuals blest in their union, one Will and one mind being now to both, shades of difference will perhaps hereafter arise, even in determining the path of duty; and though these differences of opinion may exist, and affection remain the same, it may also happen that they lead to harsh words, or cold looks, or ill-advised expressions of disapproval; wounding hearts which yet love full well. In that case, ere peace return, all must be forgiven. That God's *preventing* grace may

here be with the two chief supplicants; softening their hearts to a ready forgiveness, should future occasions call that noble grace into exercise; they offer with feelings of anxious yet humble trust, the prayer, "*Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*" From this view of the former petitions, the last is offered with more than wonted earnestness. "*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*" 'Spare us those trials or temptations, which, weak 'of faith as the best of us are, may prove our over-'throw! Spare us, if it seem good to Thee, O our 'heavenly Father! spare us those trials more espe-'cially incident to our new state of life; trials of 'temper and disposition, of patience and resignation; 'lead us not into these temptations, "but deliver 'us from evil;" and if Thou callest us to like trials 'with Job, grant to us like patience. Save us from 'the guilt, and deliver us from the pain of them.' When in heart-breathings like these, husband and wife expand this closing petition of the Lord's Prayer, we can well understand how love for the other gives ardour to the prayer of each, and wings it onward to the mercy-seat. If, earnest for peace and spiritual safety individually, how much more earnest must they be for the same blessings on behalf of the other! Now too, nor good nor evil falls on one alone; henceforth all trials are mutual; all sorrows shared. How gracious then the command of mercy, that, according to this holy form of words, we pray then most hopefully for ourselves, when we include others in our prayer. 'Grant, therefore, holy Fa-'ther,'—thus methinks the hearts now united in the holy marriage-bond pour forth their supplications,—

'Grant unto us, about to be companions through 'life's anxious pilgrimage, that whatever trials thou 'mayest see fit we pass through, as beings destined 'for immortality, we be thereby purified, and through 'grace be made meet to share together at last a 'heavenly inheritance in thine everlasting kingdom.'

THE SUPPLICATIONS AND RESPONSES[1].

The supplications which follow the Lord's Prayer, are accompanied by responses; in order that, as the minister prays on behalf both of "the servant and of the handmaid" of the Lord, now in his presence man and wife, they may look for a gracious answer to the prayer; inasmuch as, with all the added solemnity which the time and place and circumstances give to their words, they declare for themselves, while the assembled congregation, holding them sincere in their avowal, adopt the declaration, that "they *do* put their trust in the Lord," to whom the prayer is offered[2].

[1] These are taken from Holy Scripture; and are selected chiefly from Psalms lxxxvi. 2; xx. 1 and 2; xlvi. 3; cii 2.

[2] It was said by an eminent and admirable writer*, than whom there has been no more acute observer of human nature and of the springs of action by which it is moved, that "to abstract the mind from all local emotion, would be impossible, if it were endeavoured; and would be foolish if it were possible." This moral feeling, interwoven as it is with our nature, is intended for our good; and if duly cultivated, it may become a powerful adjunct to our piety. Why else did our heavenly Father, who is equally present in all places, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain — why did he deign to call it into exercise, by appointing divine worship to be held in the *place* by himself *appointed*, and so sanctify the application of it to our highest and holiest services? Why else during the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness was there an *appointed* place, even though

* Dr. Johnson.

Moreover, they proceed to avow that this trust is an *abiding* trust; companying with them far beyond the holy scene of peace now surrounding them, even to the end of their appointed time; the result of no mere burst of temporary feeling, but an enduring conviction that *God* alone is a sure refuge, whether in life or in death. Accordingly, when the minister supplicates of the "Lord, to send them help from his holy place," they express their trust in this help to be required not only in this sacred house, and this hour of joy; but through all the changes and chances of their mortal life, till time itself shall be no longer; even "for evermore." Does the minister, adopting the figurative language of holy writ, pray that the "Lord would be unto them a tower of strength?" Their heart readily owns their need of such a "fortress," "from the face of their enemy." They wisely consider that, from whatever worldly trials and dangers they may be free, the *spiritual* enemy is foe

the tabernacle, like the condition of the people at the time, were temporary and moveable. Or was it without a gracious purpose of aiding devotion, as well as of gaining visible token of honour from Israel, that when they became, though few as a people, great as a nation; the gorgeous temple of Jerusalem rose at his bidding, and "the house" so raised, "he sanctified for his name;" and that his name "being there," "the glory of the Lord filled the house*.— Doubtless the heart of the creature responds to the feeling of reverence for the place more immediately dedicated to the Creator's service, and the children of God rejoice in a holier and happier communing with Him and with their own hearts, as they feel themselves in the home of their Father, who is in heaven. Thus the circumstance of *place* adds its weight to other considerations, on the happy occasion, which unites loving hearts in holy matrimony.

* 1 Kings viii. 16. 2 Chron. vii. 1. 2 Chron. vii. 20. Refer to the note in page 315.

alike to *all*; the wicked he would plunge deeper in sin, the good he would withdraw from holiness and peace. Against this evil One, God is alone a sure refuge. And, lastly, when, in this acknowledged faith and trust, a supplication is added, "Lord! hear our prayer;" they adopt this supplication also, but in language of still greater earnestness and humility—"and let our *cry* come unto thee."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE PRAYERS.

THE PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS.

"O God of Abraham . . . . . Jesus Christ our Lord."

HAVING thus, minister and congregation, supplicated a merciful hearing at the throne of grace, the minister further offers up three prayers. This, the first, is for spiritual blessings; addressed to the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. These were holy men of old, to whom, ordering their families according to God's word, He graciously vouchsafed his blessing; and their example is held out to *these*, "the servant and handmaid of the Lord," now present; that they may be thereby encouraged to receive into their hearts the word of God, regulate their affections by its precepts, order all their ways according to its laws, and "whatever in that holy Word they shall profitably learn, may indeed fulfil the same." The invocation for blessing is strong and affecting. The appeal by which it is enforced is to the Truth of the Father of mercies, who hitherto has ever fulfilled his promises to those who obey Him,

for a thousand generations; and a blessing is implored upon his servants *now*, as it was bestowed upon his servants Abraham and Sarah of old time, in the humble hope that so blest, and "*alway* being in safety under *his* protection," they may love Him for his mercy and goodness, under all the changes of this life; and abide in that love, unforgetful in prosperity and in adversity unrepining, even to the end.

THE PRAYER FOR THE BLESSING OF CHILDREN.

"O merciful God . . . . through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It must ever humble the pride of human wisdom to consider how wonderful are all the ways of God, and how far beyond the grasp of the mind of men to comprehend! Thus, when the Almighty chose to create new worlds, and willed that a new race of beings should inhabit them, what hindered that he should have created the worlds and peopled them instantly, by the word of his will? The same voice which bade the "light be, and light was," could have also called into existence, at once, all those generations of men which have been, and shall be, to complete his new creation. He willed it otherwise; "his ways, not our ways; his thoughts, not our thoughts." With what wise and pious care, therefore, does our Church here cherish in us a holy dependence upon the great Creator of all, and a holy reverence towards the ordinance, by which He has willed to supply to himself servants here on earth, to be hereafter his angels in heaven! She leads us to a due acknowledgment of our dependence upon him, if children bless the marriage state; and, further, leads us to rely upon his mercy, with a humble trust, that when children are given,

life will be spared to the parents, for training them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; remembering, that though they are by nature fallen creatures, grace restores them; and that when christianly and virtuously brought up to the praise and honour of their *heavenly* Father, theirs is the privilege of a covenanted inheritance in the kingdom of heaven. And the married life, which may hopefully look to be so favoured of Him, who is the great Creator of all things and all men, is when husband and wife live, according to the simple but expressive words of the prayer, "in godly love and honesty;" true to each other; loving each other above all the world; but each agreeing with the other, that they are to love their God above all.

THE PRAYER FOR GRACE TO LIVE ACCORDING TO GOD'S LAWS.

"O God! . . . . through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In what better manner could the Church lead the minds of the newly-married to a just and right view of their duty to God and to each other, than by again reminding them that marriage is a *divine* institution, and therefore not to be slightly regarded, as though it were a mere civil contract. It was originally of God; it has ever had his blessing, and whilst his own solemn dedication of man and wife to each other in Paradise, invests it with a sacred defence, which a vain philosophy may hold nought, but which will for ever be the noblest bulwark for social order; so his reiteration of that solemn dedication, when he was God manifest in the flesh; and his further warnings against an infringement of it; remain for ever the surest safeguard for the

preservation of all those sweet charities of social life, which, springing from a pure unmixed lineage, spread themselves through all the various channels of relationship, and bind men together in the sacred bond of family and kindred[1]. Still further to show both the sanctity of marriage and its blessedness, its honour and high favour in the sight of God, we are reminded that by the state of matrimony is significantly represented the spiritual marriage and unity, which is betwixt Christ and his Church—and who shall sever *that* bond? who with impunity entice the soul from its love and allegiance to the spiritual Bridegroom? "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" asks the Apostle. Let us reply with him, "Neither death nor life[2]!" As then no power of circumstances, no fears or hopes of the world, are to separate us from our union with Christ, so no consideration can avail to separate husband and wife, or "put asunder those whom God by matrimony hath made one." The comparison is carried on very beautifully, and forms the ground of striking and impressive instruction. The married persons are exhorted not only to take heed to the

[1] Matt. xix. 6. Our blessed Lord, after referring the taunting Pharisees to the Word of God, which they professed to believe, and which with sufficient clearness indicated the indissoluble nature of the marriage bond—"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh*" -draws the inevitably just conclusion, "what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." See page 371.

[2] Rom. viii. 35. 38 The whole magnificent passage is well worthy a close and attentive consideration. Few Scriptures are better calculated to wing the soul upward with thoughts worthy of an immortal being at the footstool of his God.

* Gen. ii. 24.

words of counsel delivered to them by Christ and his Church, but humbly to imitate severally the example set by each, and so regulate their conduct to each other. "Greater love hath no man than this," saith St. Paul, "that a man lay down his life for his friend;" yet Christ, the spiritual Bridegroom, did lay down his life for the Church, and gave himself for it. Hence we pray that this man may love his wife, "according to God's word; as Christ, his spouse, the Church." If, however, such be the devotedness of affection justly required on the part of the man towards his wife, and he be bound thereto, as well by the word as by the example of Christ; the wife will on her part take counsel from the word and example of the Church, the spouse of Christ; and how devotedly the Church recognises in Him her guide and counsellor, her strength and comfort, every act and word are in plain and glorious evidence. Hers therefore is the aim, so well becoming one following such example, in all her ways and doings to strive to do honour to her husband, promote his welfare, and secure his comfort. The character by which she may frame herself to this excellency, is admirably pourtrayed in the words of this prayer. We pray God "mercifully to look upon her," "that she may be loving and amiable, faithful and obedient to her husband"—for "to obey" she hath solemnly vowed—"and," further, "in all quietness, sobriety, and peace, be a follower of holy and godly matrons." How instructive is this practical application of the comparison, so often drawn by our blessed Lord, in reference to this ordinance! The prayer concludes with imploring the Divine blessing upon both the man and

the woman, and bearing on the thoughts high above all which this world can bring, either of sorrow or of joy, fixes their hopes upon the glories of that eternal inheritance, which awaiteth the righteous, rich or poor, lowly or great, in the kingdom of their Father. The words are themselves such as the feeling heart loves to linger upon; nor, I think, were they ever pronounced by the minister or heard by the congregation, without exciting feelings of deep and hallowed interest, as affecting as they are salutary. What their inheritance in *this* world may eventually be, no human wisdom can foresee, and no worldly present advantages can determine. It may be peace and prosperity; it may be trouble and misery; but if God be their friend and their stay, they *may* hold fast an inheritance, which shall *never* fail: and for *that*, on their behalf, we thus affectionately and hopefully pray —"O Lord! bless them *both*, and grant them to inherit thy *everlasting* kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE CLOSING BENEDICTION.

As, throughout this service, the Church, resting her view of the marriage-state upon the authority of God, and the express declaration of Christ, presents it to the reverent notice of the congregation as a solemn religious ordinance, so the closing blessing confirms the mind in this view of it, and is admirably calculated to leave upon the hearts of the newly-married, an impression not less instructive than comforting. They understand *why* they may hopefully look that God would "pour upon them the riches of his grace" —the ordinance is now, as it was from the beginning,

of *his* appointment,—and shall he not *bless his own?* They feel likewise the wisdom of gaining his favour, which is better than life; for without his help, vain is the help of man: without his grace, vain are man's best counsels; vain are man's highest resolves; vain are man's most ardent hopes. But if *He* sanctify and bless, *then* all those holy thoughts, all those good resolutions, all that faith and trust, which have now filled the soul as it approached to the throne of grace, may be so strengthened and confirmed, that husband and wife, by mutual love and mutual forbearance towards each other, and by knowing no other striving than who shall best serve and honour their God, "may please him both in body and soul;" and finding their own best comfort, each in seeking to promote the comfort of the other, "may live together in holy love unto their lives' end."

THE EXHORTATION.

STILL further to show that she speaks with no authority, other than that with which the word of God invests her, and which she is commanded to assert; to show also that the sanctity with which she invests this ordinance is enjoined by that word,—the Church, in proceeding to address the congregation on the new duties which attach to the new state of life upon which the married persons have now entered, adduces apostolic sanction for all the precepts and all the counsel she has given to those who, in vowing to each other, have vowed unto God. "Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone," she has proved, in the prayers and supplications, in the injunctions and

warnings given throughout this service, that what *she* declares, is the whole counsel of *God*, by himself declared from the beginning, and ordained to endure unto the end. What the Lord Jehovah spake to our first parents in Paradise when He joined them together in marriage; what the Lord Jesus spake when He also declared the sanctity of marriage; *that* she speaks; that *she* declares. The ordinance is, not of man, but of God; and therefore, an ordinance holy for ever!

The argument of St. Paul upon this point is conducted with his usual skill. Since the marriage-bond is indissoluble—for "therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh"—it follows of necessity, that "he who loveth his wife, loveth himself;" since "no man hateth his own flesh." Consequently self-love is enlisted on the side of duty, and a man so loveth his wife, even as Christ his spouse, the Church, united thereto for ever. Nay, the Apostle enlarges this view of his subject, and illustrates it by the same comparison. Does Christ forbear with his Church in love, even if sometimes she be insensible to his love, and disregard the duties she has undertaken! Even so, if the wife fail even in affection, and study not the comfort of the partner of her life, he is still "not to be bitter against her" in reproaches. Think of the love of Christ to his Church, who gave himself even to death for it; shall love and kindness ever fail between those who are liable to mutual errors and infirmities, and who must expect, in a world like this, that much there will ever be to forgive and be forgiven. St. Peter, himself a married man, carries still further St. Paul's view of this subject, requiring on

the husband's part, a calm endurance of waywardness, or even occasional unkindness, if so it happen; the rather, "giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel." Thus pride is relieved of its burden, for where there is acknowledged inferiority, there forbearance is easily exercised. St. Peter adds, moreover, a motive for this forbearance far higher than any earthly consideration could supply. "Are not husband and wife heirs together of the grace of life?" and shall they by bickerings, which lead to ill-will; by bitter words, which lead to slight and disregard; shall they thus hinder their prayers for the attainment of this grace?—The thought is at all times worthy of the Christian's serious meditation; how important then must it be, impressed by the circumstances under which it is heard in this solemn service! If it abide, it may spring up in the time of need; and may oft, in after years, check the first risings of anger, calm an agitated spirit, and preserve what else a bitter word had broken—peace and love and joy.

The happiness of married life, however, depends far more than at first sight may appear, upon the continued affection of the wife toward her husband. That is the silken cord which binds together a Christian family by a bond, as firm as it is gentle: yet is it indissoluble. *Her* duties also are therefore plainly set forth in Holy Scripture. And the first great duty which St. Paul enjoins, is that which from the beginning was enjoined by our great Creator[1]—obedience according to the marriage-vow; and upon the principle already laid down for the regulation of the husband's

[1] Gen. iii. 16.

duty towards his wife; for his love must never weaken, but be evidenced by uniform kindness, "*as unto the Lord.*" And is the husband thus uniformly, amid all the variety of trial and circumstances which chequer life, to love his wife, as Christ loved the Church! With no less power comes the injunction upon the wife, that "she submit herself unto her own husband, *as unto the Lord*;" "reverencing her husband," because "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church:" and it is clear from the illustration thus presented to us, that, as the head, He is likewise "the Saviour of the body." "It is then fit in the Lord"—so the Apostle concludes his argument—that "wives submit themselves unto their own husbands." St. Peter's counsel is given in a tone of peculiar tenderness and affection, and evidences that he speaks from experience of the high and beneficial influence of Christian principles in promoting the happiness of married life, temporally and spiritually. Holding this view of the subject, he guards the wife against diminishing her kindness, in cases where perhaps neither the husband's temper nor his conduct might justly claim continuance of regard. Still the vow is not thereby weakened. And that the force of this bond seldom loses its power on wives, is evidenced by the experience of life. Nay, such is naturally the noble and generous character of woman's heart, that many a time and oft the man, who either from unavoidable ill-success or recklessness of conduct, has made shipwreck of fortune and of fame; forsaken of friends, and disregarded of all besides; finds in his home a shelter, and in his wife a friend, whose love rekindles with adversity; prompt to cheer

him in his sadness, to soothe him in his pain, to reconcile him, if haply so it be, even to himself; no reproaches for the past, no complaining at the present, no despairing for the future; the past is forgotten, the present cheerfully endured, the future well hoped for. Such is woman's love, sanctified by her vow unto God. The Apostle, however, gives to the wife a still higher motive than any which even the strongest natural affection can supply, that under all the varied trials of married life which the husband's unkindness or ill conduct may cause, she never weary in well-doing, but persevere; humbly trusting, that by the assistance of divine grace she may be made the means of bringing him to a life of christian duty and christian peace. And who knows not the quiet but prevailing influence of example in the self-denying and patient wife! One can hardly imagine a heart so hard as not to acknowledge and yield to its power; not "to be won by the life and conversation of the christian wife," who, by "subjection to her own husband" according to her vow, so brightly exemplifies her faith in carrying out her principles. Nor can the imagination picture to itself a feeling of greater joy than that which she attains, who, through long years perhaps of patient endurance from a husband's neglect or unkindness or other ill-conduct, has so borne meekly her cross; so endured her grief, suffering wrongfully; so met the trial; that at last the weary darkness passes away, the morning of joy returns, for her husband is won to virtue; and she, the happy means of his return! Perhaps some wife, thus struggling in her wretchedness, thinks within herself:—"O that it were mine to recall the wanderer from his

... a sense of love and duty! O that I could win ... to a life of Christian faith and Christian ... To such the Apostle points out, in a word, ... of accomplishing their wish. Let them put ... the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." That spirit "is in the sight of God of great price," as we know from the blessing declared by a voice from heaven upon the humble and meek[1]. Well saith the wise man, speaking of a wife thus adorned; "if there be kindness, meekness, and comfort in her tongue, then is not her husband like other men[2];" he is thrice blessed. Indeed, so much is the happiness of the husband dependent upon the continued kindness of a wife, exercised in this spirit of meekness and quietness, that she cannot, without being chargeable in God's sight with error, fail therein. It is lamentable, when the husband, worn perhaps in spirit by his intercourse with a hard and selfish world, unsuccessful it may be in his industry, and goaded by disappointments which the very tenderness of his anxiety for others' welfare renders still more galling,—it is sufficiently lamentable when *he* loses gentleness of manner, and is tempted, if not to indifference, yet to occasional harshness: but woman was intended by her Maker for man's gentle help; a help-meet to aid him in a due regulation of his life, by sharing his sorrows and participating his joys, lessening the one and brightening the other; she was framed to soothe him in his cares, counsel him in his difficulties, and by her own attachment to him win for him the regard of others; if, therefore, setting herself up above the state she

[1] Matth. v. 5, and xi. 29.

[2] Ecclesiasticus xxxvi. 23.

is destined for, and allowing self-love to usurp in her heart that place which was once filled with love towards him; if the *wife* be *bitter* against her husband, applying taunts for counsel, scoffings for sympathy, and reproach for love; thinking to increase her own importance by casting contempt upon him —*exceeding* bitter must *that* spirit be; a spirit, alike unchristian and unnatural. Wise then the wife, who thinks her brightest ornament is that meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God himself is of great price. How winning its influence in families, they best can tell who have the misery to mourn its absence. Where it pervades thought, word, and act, there peace flourishes; there husband and wife, like Abraham and Sarah, to their mutual comfort, find their own best happiness, each in studying that of the other; contention is avoided by gentleness; meekness leaves no room for anger; bitterness enters not the cup of life; and holy love triumphs[1].

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE ORDER FOR THE VISITATION OF THE SICK.

SALUTATION.

By the great mass of the heathen world in their ignorance, and even by some of the learned among them in their wisdom, it was held, that the severer calamities incident to human life were sent by God upon his creatures, as tokens of his marked anger and abhorrence. It was left for the Gospel to reveal the

[1] Refer to page 379.

happier truth, that even the most afflictive dispensations of divine Providence, if sent to punish, have yet mercy, and love, and tender care, not anger for their motive; and the ultimate good of the sufferer for their object[1]. Our heavenly Father chasteneth, not whom he hateth, but whom He loveth; He scourgeth every son whom He would *receive*, not whom He would cast away. Hence the minister, as the herald of Gospel-peace, no sooner enters the dwelling of the sick and afflicted, than he declares not wrath but reconciliation, and proclaims "*Peace to this house and to all that dwell in it.*" And what if in these days of light, as many as profess the religion of Jesus must already know this blessed truth, we are all well

[1] This was a very prevailing notion among some of the Jews. Thus in their memorable discourse with our blessed Lord as to the cause of blindness in one born blind, they took for granted that the calamity was judicial; their only doubt being, to which party, as sinners, so grievous a visitation should be traced, to the blind man himself or to his parents. The reply of the Saviour is equally tender towards the feelings of both these parties; and is conclusive as to the fact, that afflictive dispensations are sent upon men, that so they may be drawn from the world and led to their God; may purify their souls as in his sight, and so turn sorrow into joy, affliction into blessing. For though, as the whole Gospel teaches, all men by nature sin, and come short of the glory of God, "neither had this man nor his parents so" signally "sinned" as to call down signal punishment upon them above their fellow-creatures. The object was, that partly by the good effect of trial on the soul of the individual sufferer, and partly by the opportunity so given of evidencing before others the mighty power of God, and so promoting the cause of the Gospel,—"the works of God should be made manifest in him."

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."—John ix. 1, 2, 3.

reminded of it, when, with bodies weakened and our spirits sunk in the languor of sickness, we require every aid which Christian sympathy may supply, and the Church, in her delegated authority, may offer, to sustain our patience, confirm our faith, and animate our hope. The prayer, indeed, which follows —and which the minister, immediately upon finding himself in the presence of the sick, offers on bended knee and in the lowly spirit of an unworthy suppliant —may at first seem rather to encourage the error of supposing calamity to be sent in anger, because he commences at once by deprecating God's recollection "of our own iniquities and the iniquities of our forefathers:" but observe, he includes himself, and others who may be present, as all equally deserving the Divine wrath, all equally liable to afflictive dispensations. The language is explicit, as applicable generally, and not confined to the sick person individually. "Spare *us*, good Lord!" "Be not angry with *us* for ever" —language this, which so far from selecting individual sufferers as beings marked out for God's judicial anger, speaks but our own consciousness of what we *all* really merit at his hands, and deprecates "the evils we most righteously have deserved." The sufferings of the sick may soon be our own; ours therefore be the prayer for grace to meet them, when they do fall upon us, without a murmur or a plaint. That the sick man is instructed thus to view his state, is manifest from the words in which he responds— an ejaculation, brief as suited to his weakness, sufficiently strong however to express his entire and sole dependence upon the mercy of God both in his own and others' behalf—"Spare *us*, good Lord!"—and

how *hopefully* he thus invokes mercy, every faithful worshipper may for himself tell. He has heard the plea offered—even "the precious blood" of the Crucified—and that plea, he knows, cannot fail.

CHAPTER XL.

THE RESPONSES.

THE responses which immediately follow, are also brief, as suited to the condition of the weak and sick and dying; yet do they present a most beautiful and comprehensive form of Christian faith. Does the minister implore the "Lord to have mercy?" The ready response of the sick instantly acknowledges in that Almighty Lord and *Father*, his Saviour also; and he turns also to "*Christ*, to have mercy." The minister completes the declaration of faith by calling upon the third person in the glorious Trinity, that He likewise as the *Holy Ghost*, the "Lord and Giver of life," would "have mercy upon us." And what other cry becomes us when seeking to be healed? Mercy was ever the plea of the distressed; all their cry was—"Lord, have mercy on us."

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

To what prayer may we humbly trust Almighty God will so readily "bow down his ear" in mercy, as that which his own well-beloved Son did teach and command us? Its very opening—how appropriate an acknowledgment from the sick, that they are under the hand of Thee, O God! "*Our Father, who art in heaven!*" Who can murmur at whatever suffering thy fatherly hand may lay upon them? Nay, in their

most trying moments, their trust is in Thee: their great aim to declare and promote thy honour. Their reverential love never weakens, even though trials encompass them around. They know in whom they have believed, and the desire of their heart is still the same, that "*Thy name be hallowed!*" Their whole soul is now animated with a new spirit. They now feel that if the sick and dying had all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, such possessions could neither give ease of body for the present hour, nor breathe hope to the soul for its future welfare. In the midst of worldly wealth they must be poor, in the midst of worldly honours, miserable, unless they had gained through Christ Jesus the blessed though conditional hope of inheritance in that kingdom which lieth beyond the grave. Filled thus with ardent longing for an answer to their petition, to Thee, O God, they devoutly pray, "*Thy kingdom come!*"—established here in truth and grace and righteousness, hereafter in bliss and power and glory! Filled with these elevating anticipations, no obedience is hard. Their wish henceforth is, that "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!*" True it is, that where life has been passed without a hearty adoption of religious faith and religious practice, sad and bitter self-reproach must be reflected on the awakened soul of the sick and dying, when, as the words of this petition are either uttered by their own weak and trembling lips, or heard only when the minister repeats them, they remember how much of misery and sin has been caused to themselves and others, as they have followed the devices and desires of their own hearts, cast aside the guidance of the Word, slighted the godly motions of the Spirit, stifled the warning

voice of conscience, and done their own will, in bold defiance of the will of their God. Sickness, however, has made them to mourn the past, and amend. With what blissful anticipations this petition is offered by the faithful, they alone can tell. Are they sick unto death? their's is the brightening hope of soon sharing with angels their holy work, and doing God's Will not only after their manner, but in their glorious company. Is sickness subdued, and health restored? Then what glad resolves for a higher and holier and bolder obedience than their heart before ever aimed at! The world at such a moment loses all its former influence, either by its frown to deter from honouring God, or by its smiles to lure from loving Him. To the righteous, as to the penitent, presumption is checked by the petition following. Do they severally resolve, and set themselves to do *thy* Will, O God? Mark *whence* they look for power to do what they resolve! They look for it from *Thee*. To Thee they pray, that Thou wouldst give them grace: the true bread from heaven to sustain the soul in life and in the exercise of the powers thereof; even as they pray that thou wouldst give food, bread, the staff of man's bodily life, for the sustentation of the powers with which thou hast endowed him. Alive to the duties of this spiritual life, impressed with the responsibility which lies upon them to a strict and patient fulfilment of them, and awakened at last to the startling truth that, for power to fulfil them, there must be help from heaven, or the soul will as surely perish for lack of grace, as the body for lack of bread, and that God alone is the giver of both;—under these new feelings they, day by day, with a patience which not even the weary hour of sickness can break, raise,

with a weakened voice perhaps, though with a strengthened faith, the brief, yet hopeful petition, "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" But suppose God giveth us his aid for the time to come, that we may be enabled henceforth to walk in his holy laws, do his commands, and please Him both in will and deed—remembrance of past sins will rise up in the awakened soul of the sick. For them no rest till sin be pardoned. For pardon therefore we supplicate; and supplicate hopefully, because so directed of Christ; and *He* mocketh not his "brethren, and his friends[1]." At the same time, the Being, who thus encourages us to implore pardon, appoints the condition, and frames for us the very terms upon which we are to expect it. Without fulfilment of these, we may ask pardon from our childhood to the grave and shall ask in vain. What then are those terms? Once perhaps thought hard and difficult, now they are accepted readily, gratefully. "O pardon me, Thou mighty Judge"—such is the heart-language of the sick and the dying—"O, pardon me; and what Thou wilt, that will I do: when Thou commandest, then will I obey! Even my enemy will I, from my soul, forgive." Therefore "*Forgive us our trespasses,*" even "*as we forgive them that trespass against us.*" "So clear am I now of aught but love and good-will in my heart, that in the name and through the mediation of thy Son our Lord and Saviour Christ, I fear not, O gracious Father, thus to make conditions even with Thee."—Indeed, nothing can prove more strikingly the truth of holy writ, that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," than the softening effect of a season of sickness upon hearts, formerly

[1] Matt. xii. 49. John xv. 15.

the most hard and unyielding. The profligate is horrorstruck, as his eyes open to see the awful precipice of death eternal on which he every moment stood. His reckless passions are controlled. The scoffer, the sabbath-breaker, the careless, the worldly, the indifferent—all deploring their sins, negligences, and ignorances—cry out for pardon, and acknowledge one only name under heaven given to man whereby he can be pardoned; *that* name, Christ: one only condition on which pardon can be granted; *that* condition, forgiveness of others. O, the depth of the riches both of the knowledge and goodness of God! The self-love of the individual is made the very means of cherishing in his heart love towards his fellow-creatures. Thus the revengeful lays aside his enmity. He loves himself, and his fiercest anger then passes away. Even the slanderer, who in his health and strength with malice and ill-will strove against his neighbour's fame and good name, is no sooner laid on a bed of sickness and approaching death, than all is changed. He too loves himself, and as he finds, though late, that to rush into the presence of his Maker and Judge, with unforgiveness in his heart, will be at once a bar to his own forgiveness from God, he haply turns to better thoughts, confesses his sin, hates it and abhors it; and having at last freely and fully forgiven others their trespasses against him, offers the petition for pardon, with good hope that its conditions being fulfilled, its blessings will of grace be granted; and he "blesses the Lord, who hath given him a warning," so salutary, so saving[1]. Further benefit also has accrued to the soul from this season of sickness. Neces-

[1] Psalm xvii. 3, xix. 11.

sarily withdrawn from the world and thrown back upon itself, the mind feels at last man's utter weakness and inability to think or do any thing good as of himself. Its conviction is now clear, that man's "sufficiency is of God." Hence a dread of future temptations, with a trust in God to deliver out of them, is avowed in the closing petitions of this prayer; "*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*" Never before did the sufferer pour forth this supplication so humbly, so earnestly, so hopefully. He rejoices that God, his heavenly Father, willing to receive again his erring child, scourges him with sickness and sorrow, makes the way of sin distasteful to him, bends the pride of self to the humility of faith, and leadeth him back to the way of holiness and peace: if trial be appointed, deliverance is vouchsafed.

THE RESPONSES.

After the Lord's prayer—in which, short as it is, and familiar as it has been to the sick from their earliest consciousness, their heart, their lips, and haply even their voice may join—follow some brief and appropriate responses, admirably suited to one weakened by sickness of body, yet earnest in mind to join in this holy worship. The words breathe the true spirit of Christian faith and Christian practice; ever dread of man's weakness, with trust in God's grace; fear of self, with hope in the Lord.

The sufferer trusts in the Lord to send help in answer to his prayer; and though he knoweth full well, that the spiritual fight ceaseth not till death be swallowed up in victory, yet doth he fearlessly rely on

help from above, that the enemy shall have no advantage over him; nor the wicked, though they advance, and tempt, and assault, so approach as to hurt him. If the Lord hear his cry, what can harm him! The Lord himself is to him a tower, high above the face of his enemies, and strong against all their assaultings. The Lord is his defence [1].

THE COLLECTS.

"O Lord! look down from heaven .. through Jesus Christ our Lord"

THE sick man having raised his cry to heaven, the minister beseeches the Lord who reigneth there, *to look down* thence; to *behold, visit, and* himself *relieve his servant*—else, vain were the help of man. True it is, that love and affection are prompt to administer ease and a watchful supply of what the body needeth; and the Church by her ministers can sympathize; can lend her ready aid to exercise the soul in a patient endurance; and be the herald of the message of peace to the penitent, and of hope to all: but life and death, body and soul, are in the hands of the Lord; health to the one, and healing to the other by the spirit of pardon and reconciliation, is his alone to give: whilst mercy, therefore, not merit, not even the sufferings of the sick are our plea to be heard; we confess that if comfort and sure confidence is to be ours, it must rest upon *divine* help; even "*on Thee*, O God!" Thou alone canst defend thy sick servant from the danger of the enemy, the devil; that great and constant foe

[1] These Responses are from God's word. Psalm lxxxvi. 2. xx. 2. lxxxix. 23. lxi. 3. lxi. 1.

like to Thee and to man. Not even in sickness is the soul free from his temptations. To the worldly, he whispers delay; to the righteous, presumption; to the conscience-stricken, despair. For every occasion, even for this, he has his temptation ready. Lo, then, O God! we pray, "be *Thou* his defence!" O "*keep Thou him in perpetual peace and safety!*" Keep his soul in peace, and his body in safety, for thy Son's sake, who himself lived in the flesh, and died and rose again for us, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The tone of this address, at first, perhaps, strikes upon the mind as bold, and hardly befitting man, when a suppliant before his Maker. David felt that if God deign to behold the things even of *heaven*, He thereby humbleth himself: the question therefore arises, how shall man, fallen and in misery, call upon so awful a Being, to *look down from heaven*, and behold, and visit *him*? The answer is found clearly written in the word of that very God; and Faith with joy applies it. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones[1]." Can Faith hesitate then to trust in such a present God? or doubt his power or his will to behold, visit, and relieve his sick and suffering servants? and in all their distresses of mind, body, or estate, "give them the comfort of divine grace and sure confidence in *Him*?" It is impossible to doubt, but that He will grant them patience under their sufferings, and at

[1] Is. lvii. 15.

last a happy issue out of all their afflictions. O this blessed and sustaining truth! The God of *heaven* beholds, visits, and relieves his sick and suffering servants on *earth!*—My soul! Be strong in this faith!

"Hear us, almighty and most merciful God . . . through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The second Collect instructs the sufferer to cherish a proper frame of mind, whatever be the issue of this visitation. Whether the sickness be for life or death; whether God so answer the prayers offered up, that renewed health be vouchsafed for the body and renovated grace for the soul; or whether it seem good to Him who ruleth all things and ruleth them well, to deny returning health to the body, even though He the more abundantly give grace continually to renovate the soul, till, life's hard conflict over, the spirit return unto the God who gave it—whatever be the *end* of this visitation, the collect directs us to a right use of it. The prayer is earnest, that this trial of faith, in all its bearings, may be sanctified; that in all the pains of sickness, all its weary wakeful hours, the soul may feel the trial to be from the hand of God; even *his fatherly correction*. As the sick man finds his bodily weakness to increase, and his life to draw nearer and nearer to the grave, grace is further intreated for him, that he may strengthen his faith in Thee, O God, his only sure trust; and, as time and opportunity for the task of working out his salvation hourly wear away and gradually fail, so he may more and more seriously repent. With *every* man, in the mid flush of health and strength, repentance is a bounden

duty. If the *sick* fail in it, what language can tell their *daring* and their *folly!*

Suppose the sick man duly impressed with his condition in the season of sickness, as being on the borders of the grave; yet, by divine grace, one with God and with his Christ; his trial sanctified; faith thereby strengthened; hope thereby confirmed—he will be well armed for whatever issue the Almighty may appoint to his visitation. Should it be God's good pleasure "that he be restored to his former health," then like "the lame man healed[1]," behold! he leapeth for joy; every weight which of old did so easily beset him, is removed; every hindrance which formerly impeded him in his Christian race is laid aside; and free from the dominion of sin, though ever struggling therewith, he leads the residue of his life in the fear and to the glory of God: his sickness has been sanctified. Or should it be ordered otherwise; should his sickness take its onward course to the grave and gate of death; still, by the help of divine grace, he has so borne the visitation of his God, that, by unmurmuring suffering, unwearied patience, dutiful resignation, and a thankful reliance on the hand of his heavenly Father to temper judgment with mercy, his trial has been more than sanctified. His is the hope, of which not even the fraud and malice of the devil or man can deprive him, that "after this painful life ended, he may dwell with his heavenly Father in life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The visitation of sickness, thus sanctified in life, is thus in death glorified.

[1] Acts iii. 8.

God! This thought—what benefit, what comfort does it afford! How consolatory under the sore burden of sickness, to "know, that for whatever cause the sickness is sent unto us, it is God's visitation." Perhaps it is sent "to try your patience for the example of others." What a cheering light that view of the visitation pours into your heart; how animating, how comforting the reflection! Doubtless there have been moments in your season of sickness, when among other sad thoughts, *this* has harassed you; that you are rendered useless to others. But is it so? Nay, is it not far otherwise? Can ever the Christian's example shine more nobly for himself, more brightly for his fellow-creatures, more evidently to the honour of his God, than when, as he exhibits a patient resignation under suffering; submissive, uncomplaining, unre-

tical inference which He draws from it, is as comforting as it is just. "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: *sufficient unto the day* is the evil thereof*." Uninstructed, man had not desired thus to keep his mind free from the anticipation of trouble in a world where trouble is his inheritance†; but a firm reliance on the unceasing minute care of the supreme Ruler of events teaches him at once submission under present ills, and such a reliance that future ills will either be averted by love, or sanctified by mercy; that whatever present enjoyment his heavenly Father may vouchsafe to him, he embitters not by sad anticipations for the morrow. He is permitted to view each day's trial as sufficient for the day, and leave the future to his God. Thus the stern duty of faith becomes the Christian's high privilege. Whether health or sickness be appointed him, he knows either to be from God. He rejoices in the one without presumption, and is submissive under the other without repining, "knowing this, that Almighty God is the Lord of life and death, and of all things to them pertaining‡."

* Matth. vi. 34. † Job v. 7.

‡ The opening of this Exhortation.

pining; the language of his lips speaks the language of a subdued heart; "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good:" whilst for the power, the strength, the fortitude thus to bear his cross, he refers others to the same spirit from on high, for which he prayed,—and which he gained, and which is always at hand—the promised Comforter? He owneth the power to be of God; and in so doing promoteth the glory of God. In this season of sickness, then, has it been yours to fear, that your usefulness as a servant of Christ was over; and that activity being past, you could neither honour your God, nor benefit your family, your friends, your neighbours? Cast off a fear so vain. Be comforted. Never can your light more brightly shine before men, to the honour of your God, than when they see your work of faith thus operative; learn from you the source whence power for the work was gained; and, led themselves to follow your good example, give God the praise; flee to the same Author and Giver of the spirit of faith; and so "glorify their Father which is in heaven [1]." Still further does the Church encourage you to meet the dispensation as heaven-sent. What animated motive does she hold out that you bear it patiently? As you, a tender anxious mother, catch at and store up whatever may turn out for the welfare of your child, so the Church treasures up for her children the wondrous assurances given by Him, who shall judge the world in righteousness, that at the last day there shall be to his faithful ones, through grace, praise, though unmerited; glory, though undeserved; and honour, though

[1] Matt. v. 16.

unlooked for; with the thrilling welcome of approbation—"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" How anxiously would she win us all over to such a life, as would lead through death to that happy consummation of our patient faith, and enduring hope, and unfailing obedience! That she may the rather gain her end for the soul's welfare, she reminds the sick, plainly and faithfully, that one object of the trial of their faith is to make them meet for their inheritance, and, through Christ Jesus, fit objects of approbation and praise—"that their faith may be found in the day of the Lord, laudable, glorious, and honourable; to the increase of glory and endless felicity[1]."—Where is the mother's heart which could bear that her child lose commendation, when within reach; fall short of

[1] Strong as are the expressions of encouragement here held forth by the Church, they rest "upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." At the last day," saith the *Apostle* Paul, speaking of a righteous as a *laudable* course, "shall every man have *praise* of God*." So the royal *Prophet*, whilst he refers the gift to the free bounty of Jehovah, rejoices to know, that to the faithful, whose strength and trust and dwelling is with the Most High, "the Lord will give grace and *glory*†." And shall any one doubt the truth, that such a life shall be in *honour*, whilst the unchangeable word of *Jesus Christ* himself remains, wherein that truth is founded, as a building on its corner-stone; "If any man serve me, him will my Father *honour* ‡." How refreshing is it to the Christian pilgrim, thus to find, that the waters of comfort, which the Church proffers to the strengthening and refreshing his faith and hope, are indeed drawn from the well of life; from the rock whose waters are alike inexhaustible in their supply, and unfailing in their efficacy; waters, of which they who drink need thirst no more. Are they not free to all?

* 1 Cor. iv. 5. † Ps. lxxxiv. 11. ‡ John xii. 26.

renown, when within its grasp; or fail of honour, when honour is to be gained with safety and with joy! *You* know no such coldness towards *your* children; the *Church* knows no such towards *hers*.

But this visitation may have a further object, according to the state and condition of the sick person. It may be a warning voice to the irreligious, the worldly, the careless. There may be some sin hidden in the heart and concealed from the sight of men, which yet "offends the eyes of our heavenly Father." Is that your state?—your conscience will give a faithful answer. It were wise in that case to view the sickness as "sent to correct and amend whatsoever" causeth that offence; of whatsoever kind or to whatsoever degree those sins, negligences, and ignorances may be. This warning, however, has for its aim not to discourage the sinner, but to animate him to repentance by the assurance which immediately follows—an assurance fraught every way with benefit and consolation. Whatever be the cause of this visitation; whether, as fine gold is purified in the furnace, the righteous are thereby tried and formed to brighter glory; or the sinner is thereby tried, that, roused from his death-like torpor, he may become animated to new life and new powers, as a lowly penitent of the cross—whatever be the cause, if the effect be sanctified to the confirming the good and changing the evil, it will be blessed. "Know you certainly," therefore saith the Church, that "if you truly repent you of your sins, and bear your sickness patiently, trusting in God's mercy, for his dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, and render unto Him humble thanks for his fatherly visitation, submitting yourself wholly

unto his will, it shall turn to your profit[1], and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting life."

EXHORTATION FOR THOSE IN EXTREMITY OF SICKNESS.

As the sickness becomes more severe, and is evidently wearing away the body, bringing it down to the grave; the sick person is exhorted to consider more and more seriously, that the visitation is sent by his heavenly Father, in mercy, to prepare him for that awful change which death will at last reveal. And surely, whatever aids us in such preparation must be sent in mercy, even though by affliction. God loveth our souls, and desireth their eternal welfare; therefore, as a father, though often to his own pain, subjects his son to chastening, practises him in self-denial, urges him on to exertion, and haply habituates him to disappointments, in order to train him for filling well and honourably and happily, the post of life to which an earthly inheritance may call him; so God, the heavenly Father of us all, in very love afflicts and chastens us, that by sorrow, pain, and sickness, he may discipline our souls for a better state than this; and make them meet for that eternal state of blessedness and honour, which is by covenant the promised inheritance of the faithful, as fellow heirs with Christ of his eternal kingdom of glory—that, "partakers of his holiness here," we may be partakers of his happiness hereafter.

The Church then, according to the apostolical spirit

[1] Heb. xii. 10.

which pervades her services, proceeds to encourage the sick man by the example of St. Paul, even "to rejoice in afflictions," bearing "with thanksgiving his heavenly Father's correction." To render this encouragement the more persuasive, she presents to us the suffering Jesus, our example as well as our sacrifice; in proof that there should be "no greater comfort to "Christian persons than to be made like unto Christ "by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sick-"nesses." And lest in the depressing season of sickness, the afflicted should well nigh let go their faith, she adds the wondrous truth, that the beloved yet afflicted Son of God, "went not up to joy, but first he "suffered pain; He entered not into his glory before "He was crucified." Since, moreover, as that heavenly Sufferer has declared the servant must not expect to be above his Master, where is the faithful and attached servant, who rejoices not to share the troubles of a kind and loving master?—"so truly our way "to eternal glory is to suffer here with Christ; and our "door to enter into eternal life, is gladly to die with "Christ; that we may rise again from death, and dwell "with Him in everlasting life." Thus gently leading us to prepare for the close in death of that visitation which the hand of a heavenly Father hath laid upon us, and concluding that for the considerations before stated we shall take our sickness *patiently*—seeing it to be for the profit of our souls—she proceeds in exhorting us, to strengthen her exhortation by an appeal to our consistency. What is our profession? We all vowed not only to renounce all evil, and to believe all God's word, but to obey all God's Will. Now, how hast thou kept thy vow in health? What says thy

conscience in sickness? Is repentance sincere and earnest? Is faith firm, and unshaken even by this thy present trial? What has been thy obedience? has it been such as now gives peace in the retrospect?—Remember thou art now, every hour, advancing nearer and nearer to the judgment-seat of God; the Searcher of hearts; the Judge of all men without respect of persons! Riches, and honour, and power, before Him win no favour; poverty, and shame, and lowliness, claim no exemption from judgment. "Examine yourself and your state, both before God and man." Are you at peace with God, as a pardoned penitent though Christ? Are you at peace with men, forgiving as you would be forgiven? Suppose your heart condemn you on these points; better so, and you be startled into repentance, than wait till God judge you and repentance come too late. The hope which the Church here holds out,—that "you may find mercy at our heavenly Father's hand for Christ's sake, and not be accused or condemned in that fearful judgment"—is founded upon the bold language of St. Paul; who, as usual, always full of courage himself, and prompt either to arouse or sustain courage in others, thus speaks the language of faith, as in leading you to "judge yourself, that you be not judged of the Lord," he reminds you, that the Spirit of power for the work is yours if you pray for it; "We can do all things *through Christ*, which strengtheneth us[1]."

[1] Phil. iv. 13.

THE ARTICLES OF THE FAITH.

"I believe . . . . . life after death[1]."

THE minister is now directed to gain your direct assent to those articles of the Christian faith, to which at your Baptism you were first pledged, and to which in your daily service you have since, according to your profession, consented. It is desirable, however, that you refresh your fainting strength by now renewing and repeating these with the minister, in token that in sickness as in health, in death as in life, you rejoice to evidence yourself a member of "Christ's Holy Catholic Church;" having the hope of "the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting." Thus you are armed for life or for death.

If recovery be vouchsafed, you return to this world a new man; "no longer conformed to it, but transformed by the renewing of your mind." You have learned duly to prize the privilege of your high calling as of the "sons of God," a "fellow-heir with Christ," "sanctified" by the Spirit. Are you rich? you no longer trust for happiness to your riches, but to the love of your heavenly Father, whose bounty bestows them, and to whose honour you henceforth apply them. Are you poor? you no longer make poverty a plea for dishonesty or murmuring or discontent; but you trust that your Father in heaven, who feedeth the birds of the air that call upon Him, will much more feed you,

[1] Refer to pages 82, 134, and 276 where the several parts of the Belief are more fully explained.

if you pray to Him, and put your whole trust in Him. Are you ever betrayed into sin, you will not despair —God forbid!—you believe in Jesus Christ, who died to wash away your sin; and you rejoice in the gracious call of his Gospel, "Repent and be saved." Do you strive to lead a good and righteous life? you presume not; you glory not. Your trust for acceptance is still, more and more, on the sole righteousness which is through Christ Jesus, the only Saviour of a fallen world. Neither will the wise man, who believeth in the Holy Ghost, glory in his wisdom. With the Apostle he will at once allow, that the wisdom of the world is and must be foolishness with God; and that the wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation can be drawn only from the fountain whence it is free for all alike to draw,—even the Holy Spirit of God. Never unmindful, however, of the same Apostle's warning against a presumptuous reliance on that wisdom to the neglect of active holiness, he will the more diligently "work out his own salvation;" *because* it is God who by his Spirit worketh for him and with him.

If God please that your present sickness end in death, you are well-armed against it. You present the shield of this faith against all those terrors of death and judgment by which Satan with fierce wrath assaults the soul of the sick and dying. Your heavenly Father, into whose presence you are about soon to pass, is reconciled by the willing sacrifice of his blessed Son. That you have sinned, you confess; but the word of God assures you—and "God is greater than your heart[1]"—that "Christ," in whom

[1] 1 John iii. 20.

you believe, "hath died and become the propitiation for your sins." The world is leaving you. Your earthly comforts fail. The voice of love and affection will, indeed, pour its sorrows over you, but you will have left your earthly house; and that voice will fall unheeded on the ear of death. Yet, comfort is yours —comfort, which pain and anguish and agony cannot wrest from the heart—for the Holy Ghost, himself the Comforter, is with you still; bearing witness with your spirit that you are of the children of God.

Where then is fear? You are leaving the loved ones of earth; you are nearing a Father in heaven! You are passing into eternity, unworthy of mercy; but you believe in the forgiveness of sins. One has gone before you, whose own perfections will be imputed to you; He hath gone to prepare a place for you with Him; and He is now about to open to you, as you humbly trust, the kingdom of heaven: for you believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting, through a risen and ascended Saviour. Your own powers of thought and mind are failing; behold the Spirit of wisdom and consolation is promised to abide with you ever! Where then is fear? the shield of Faith is at hand.—They know no fear, whose trust is the Lord!

THE RUBRICS.

THE Rubrics, which follow the required declaration of faith, open with a direction to the minister to examine the sick person as to his repentance and charity. But this direction is framed in so beautiful a spirit of sympathy, and with so tender a feeling, that the suf-

ferer can hardly fail gladly to accept the proffered aid of one so deeply interested in his welfare as his minister. And it must be very comforting to a soul pressed down with an afflicted body, to feel that such help is at hand; checking his rising despair, animating his courage, quickening his hope. The authorized servant of his divine Master dare not but exhort the dying, well and faithfully to examine their own hearts, as to whatever sin be their burden; for all *must be* known to that great Being, before whose judgment-seat they will so soon stand. He also pointedly directs special attention to that most important Christian duty of forgiveness. For suppose it possible, that a soul could stand at heaven's gate, pure as snow, *except* the spot of unforgiveness—Alas! to the unforgiving of men, equally with the unforgiven of God, that gate openeth not. The very condition of an entrance there, reconciled through Christ Jesus to our Father in heaven, is, that we bring no enmity towards our brethren on earth. We daily *ask* forgiveness, only according to the measure by which we have first forgiven others.— There is reconciliation therefore between man and his God, only so far as there is reconciliation between man and his brethren. The sick man may the more hopefully be thus exhorted to examine himself by a stricter scrutiny, and fairly judge how far he forgives them who either have offended him, or at whom he, groundlessly, may have taken offence, not only because he *must be* anxious himself to be forgiven of God; but because the difficulty on his part in forgiving his enemy, is now rendered easy. To the world he is dead. No false shame now intervenes with the withering suggestion, "Thou art lowering thyself."—

Dust to dust will soon return; and pride but mocketh dust and ashes. The heart too must be indeed base as stubborn, which sickness and approaching death soften not.

That part of the Rubric which relates to the due management of the sick man's temporal affairs had its origin in the strict view taken by our Church of the warning injunction which was addressed by St. Paul to Timothy[1] upon this subject; and which lays down a principle of action highly necessary in the case of those, who in former ages more especially were wont, for the honour of God and his religion, to bequeath their goods as well in liberality towards the poor, as to the general purposes of spreading far and wide the knowledge of the true God. Care was necessary, lest over-wrought zeal or any ill-regulated motive should lead the dying person to give to such purposes *beyond* his ability, and apply to them a greater share of his property than strict justice might permit, with reference to his kindred. Therefore he was exhorted first to see that they of his own household were duly cared for, as far as human prudence could provide, amid "the changes and chances of life." Due heed was ever to be taken for the proper support of survivors.

But there are pains sharper than death! sorrows deeper than the grave! The spirit of a man may bear his share of those infirmities, to which flesh is heir—trouble, sickness, sorrow, or other adversity, and even spiritual suffering—but a wounded spirit; a conscience smarting with the unhealed wound of sin, unforgiven because unrepented; who can bear? Peter

[1] 1 Tim. v. 8.

bore up under his infirmity. Judas sunk under his conscience. Therefore it is, that the closing direction of the Rubric, without insisting upon the absolute necessity of the duty, recommends, or "*moves* the sick person to make a *special* confession of his sins, *if* he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter." Nothing can be more striking than the blended caution and boldness with which this direction is given to the minister. The Church forgets not for a moment the authority with which she is invested by her divine Founder; at the same time, the minister is directed to proceed as sympathising with the sufferer, and prompt to speak such words of comfort, as the commission with which he is entrusted may justify. In health, the call is to *general* confession; in sickness, to *special* confession, if the soul of the dying have any special sin, of which it travails to disburden itself. And what to the dying, now, if their *fellow-creatures* know their sins?—*God always knew them.* Before *Him* they are hastening to appear; and their fears importunately call upon them to heed the Apostle's warning—to judge themselves that they be not judged of God.

THE ABSOLUTION.

If the sick man—having wisely made confession; relieving his mind by disburthening it of its hitherto unacknowledged sin, pouring his griefs and sorrows into the heart of one who altogether sympathizes with him, and finding in the minister of Christ a loving brother—"humbly and heartily desire it," the minister is ready to pronounce that absolution, the spirit of which pervades every page of the Gospel. Indeed,

were it otherwise, the Gospel were vainly within our reach, and all men would be yet in their sins. The power *thus* to absolve was deputed to his Church by Christ himself, in the memorable declaration which he made after breathing on his apostles and investing them with the authority attached to their mission—"Whose sins soever ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained:" a declaration which was to make it clear, to the end of time, that for man, in the pride either of learning or of ignorance to set up for himself a standard of judgment between him and his God, other than that provided in the written Gospel, were indeed a vain thing. There is to be no other way to pardon, than that of repentance and faith, declared by the Church, in Christ; and so declared, because it is the word of God: whilst the ministers of that Word, in the faithful discharge of their office, are neither to relax the conditions of forgiveness contained in their commission, nor limit the blessings attached to it; and since in that commission the offer of mercy is conditional—"*Repent*, and be saved"—"forgiveness of his offences is fully and fearlessly pronounced to the sick man," *because* he hath declared himself to be of those "who truly repent, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." The ministers, throughout, when exercising this their office on behalf of a sick brother, refer all authority to the great and glorious Being who is equally *their* Lord and Saviour as *his*. To themselves they arrogate nothing. Theirs is but to do the bidding of their Lord, lovingly and faithfully; thus absolving their penitent fellow-Christian, at his own request, of all his sins; for "the blood of Christ

cleanseth from *all* sin[1]." To confirm this view of their ministration, they most solemnly add the name in which they pronounce this so great blessing—not in their own name; not in the name of the Church; but in the name of the blessed Author, and Giver, and Preserver of it—" the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." What mingled feelings must crowd the soul of the dying, as this Name falls upon his dying ear. In this Name he was in infancy admitted an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven — in

[1] " O, mother,"—exclaimed a dying son in his penitence—" O, Mo-
" ther! I have found peace to my heart. I have confessed my sin.
" I have lost my misery. O what misery it was to try and conceal
" my sin from God. I once hated those who had offended me, and
" despised religion and its ministers; now I feel nothing but kind-
" ness to every body. Mother, come, kneel down by my bed-side.
" I can pray now; for Jesus Christ will now pray for me*. Now, too,
" I know God is here; and I did not know it once. That is now my
" comfort. O, dearest Mother! you remember how the thought of
" it used to be my horror. O that I had followed all your good
" advice. But I remember it all now plainly as if it was yesterday.
" O, how I wish I had minded you then. But your goodness God
" will reward. And if it had not been for your teaching then, what
" should I have known now. O, Mother, come let us pray."—It would be difficult to say, which were more touching; this burst of feeling from the once stern and reckless son about to be cut off in his prime, or the reply of his heart-broken mother. " A blessing on
" that voice of penitence, my son! Now are all my prayers an-
" swered! all my trouble is repaid now, dear one! Son! I brought
" you into a world of sin! -But, God be praised! you leave it, a child
" of grace, and I hope, through my blessed Saviour, that you will be
" a child of glory."—Mothers! Thus, many a time and oft, when you have passed to your rest in the world of spirits, your early culture may give late fruit; and the seeds of virtue and holiness, which seemed long time lost, are proved to have been only dormant; quickened into life by sickness, trouble, death. " Be ye then not weary in
" your well-doing."

* John xvi. 9.

this name he trusts to find that his inheritance is sealed, in the glorious spiritual world which is even now opening upon him.

THE PRAYER OF CONSOLATION.

Among the excellences which distinguish this prayer, is the clear proof it affords how entirely the form of absolution provided by the Church for those "who humbly and heartily desire it," though a ministerial act upon the authority of another—the power to absolve being referred to God—is yet a boon she dare not withhold, where it is desired by those who profess to be ready with the appointed conditions on which it is to be granted; inasmuch as she is authorised and commanded to confer it by the word of Him "who is head over all." A right view of the subject indeed is plainly opened to us in the first part of the prayer. There, not only does the word of God determine who are fit objects for this announcement of pardon; but the Being who authorises that announcement is at once declared to be God himself; and the grounds upon which the pardon is implored are stated —even the abounding mercy of God. Thus does the Church "absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Jesus Christ;" and this she does, because these are they whom the divine word absolves, and to whom it is Christ's ordinance that his ministers declare the same.—Does she address herself humbly to God on their behalf? She knows that He alone can "put away the sins" even "of them who truly repent:" so acknowledged a truth is it, that none "can forgive sins save God only [1]." Again, are the grounds upon

[1] Mark ii. 7.

which she rests her petition, the belief that God is a "most merciful God!" Strong is the ground upon which she so prays: what meaneth else St. Paul's instructive monition to Titus, that "God hath *saved* us, according to his *mercy*[1]!" A supplication is added, that whatever weakness of faith and hope may have been caused by the severity of trial during sickness,—when the spiritual enemy specially tempts the soul to impatience, and murmuring, and repining—may be removed, and their wasted strength so renewed, that henceforth, not tossed about with every wind of doctrine, but remembering all the comfort derived throughout their trial, from the ministrations of the Church, men may rejoice to abide evermore in the unity of the same; continued therein by his grace, who founded it, with authority to teach all nations; and with the promise, that as his Spirit was to abide with her ministers, a comforter, for ever, so He would himself never leave them, never "forsake them;" but "be with them always, even to the end of the world." Emboldened by these considerations, the minister entreats his merciful God, with yet added compassion to behold this sick brother—to consider his contrition, now that he is convinced of sin; to accept his tears of penitence, as he stands at the foot of the cross, weeping his own shame, and his Saviour's sufferings; and to assuage his pain, not of body only, but of soul; not of sickness only, but of remorse, when he thinks what share of these sufferings his own sin did cause. So great is the care of our Church that this part of her service should not, for an instant, be misunderstood, that

[1] Titus iii. 5.

she again reminds the sick person and others who may be gathered round him, that as her authority in pronouncing the absolution of sins to the penitent, so his hope in the absolution so pronounced, rests not on the merit of his own act in repenting, or on the virtues of her act in absolving, but on the mercy, in which "only they" severally "put their full trust." And it is because his faith is there fixed, that Christ's ministers still hopefully appeal on his behalf, both for the remission of past sins, and for the strength of divine grace to overcome sin for the future. Thus the soul is prepared either for a holy life or a peaceful death. The close of the prayer speaks altogether the language of a firm trust in the mercy of this forgiving God; beseeching him that "*whenever* He shall please to take the sick man hence"—whether immediately upon this sickness, or after added intervals of renewed life and health — he would take the penitent into his favour, "through the merits of his most dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." . . With what fervour must each heart respond to that supplication! With what hope may it adopt that trust!

PSALM LXXI.

"In Thee . . . . . like unto Thee?"

THAT the sick be more encouraged to receive these consolations of the Church, a Psalm is added, every way appropriate to the occasion. Its language, admirably expressive of the grounds upon which the soul animates afresh its faith and its hope, breathes the most entire dependence upon the great Creator and Preserver of his creatures; and with every higher and

more exalted motive to holiness, mingles the tenderest and most affecting. Thus, when with David we trust that God, as supreme over all, will "be our stronghold, whereunto we may *alway* resort"—in all changes and chances; in all seasons of youth and age, health and sickness; in all sorrows our refuge, in all joys our safety—we pray hopefully, because we remember that already He has in fact been to us that stronghold. His gracious goodness hath, so to speak, *prevented* our petition. He *has been* "our hope, even "from our youth, Through *Him* we *have been* holden "up, ever since we were born; and He it is who did "take us from our mother's womb." As the heart, softened by these reflections, recurs to the earliest recollections of life, what thousand hidden memories start from their hiding places, and array themselves in all the freshness of childhood, as though years had never touched them. Looking back, too, at that childhood and the season of youth which followed it, how readily do we trace, what at the time were perhaps unheeded, evident marks of the immediate superintendence of a gracious Providence, sheltering us during the helpless years of the one period, and the heedless, often reckless, course of the other. Indeed, we can recollect, perhaps, how, in many a childish sorrow, all unconscious as we were at the time what causes acted upon us, when our young lips spake their evening prayer, commending father and mother, brethren and sisters, relations and friends, neighbours and fellow-creatures to the care and love of our heavenly Father—a calm came o'er the spirit of our minds; our sobbing hearts were soothed; a holy peace stole upon us; and we sunk to sleep in smiles, because we were "gathered under

the shadow of *his* wing." These reflections, aided by the awakening influence of hours of sickness, still further remind us of the debt of gratitude which we all owe to the Church, who as an anxious watchful mother did herself remember us in those unconscious hours of childhood and infancy. What if she leads her assembled multitudes to pour forth their united voices in supplication for all estates of men; for nations, and kings, and princes, and governors? What if with one holy accord the congregation open their hearts in prayer that the counsels of empires be prospered with the blessings of peace and godly quietness! —surely the same voices, following her guidance, raise no less earnest supplication, send up no less fervent prayers "*for young children!*" We now, perhaps, think—and who shall gainsay the thought, or doubt the well-founded hope from which it springs?—that to the supplications and prayers so offered our heavenly Father did graciously vouchsafe to hearken; and, fulfilling the desires and petitions on our behalf, as seemed to Him most expedient for us, "did in mercy grant his favour, and preserve the young children," for whom his people prayed. But owe we no grateful recognition of the spiritual mother, who thus tenderly cared for us? Have we no gratitude either for her tender love which felt our helplessness, or her pious care which strove to provide protection and strength in the prayers of others, when we lay cradled in all the helplessness of unconscious infancy! And what if when called in due course to the several duties of active life, troubles have compassed us; and with added years have come added trials? What even if fortune, fame, and health all lost, the once ready

smiles of the world have given place to its frowns; and the wicked and the worldly view us, like some stricken hart upon the mountains, fit subjects either of neglect or of enmity; and, glorying in the bitter thought that "God hath forsaken us," rouse themselve to "persecute and take us," because, as they vainly suppose, "God hath forsaken us, and there is none to deliver us?" — Even *then*, "shall not our heart be afraid." "We know in whom we have believed;" even in Him, whose unfailing word hath assured us, that "the patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever." We, each, adopt the faith and language of David, "As for me, I will patiently abide, *alway*." Nay, we can add with him the resolve so worthy of a christian courage, which ever rises higher as danger more fiercely threatens; "I will" even "praise thee more and more." It may be, that the sick is aged also; yet is he aware that even so the Christian must let his light shine before men to the glory of God. His then is the sure and animating consolation, that never perhaps could example shine brighter than now. True! activity may be past, the bodily powers be gone, and the mind too weak to express all it feels; but the influence of a christian bearing never fails: the authority of a holy life never dies. Every way, "the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness;" and it is so found, where its last days are passed in guiding others into the same righteous way; "showing forth God's strength and his power" to the generations which follow them. And since counsel never comes with greater weight than from the voice of experience, so never does the faith of others gather to itself more strength than

when it sees the same principle acted upon in the case of others; sustaining, either youth, or manhood, or old age, in the several trials appointed them; enabling each, according to their need, to prepare meetly for his end. "If therefore,"—so may the sick and suffering Christian say, in the spirit of the Psalmist's faith—"if life be restored, and recovery of health be vouchsafed, with fresh boldness will I go forth to a fulfilment of its duties, for 'I shall go forth in the *strength* of the *Lord*, and make mention of his righteousness only;' I will rejoice to give Him all the praise and all the glory."—Our reflections meanwhile must ever close, as David's did, with the language of wonder, love, and praise; "Thy righteousness, O God, is very high, and great things are they that thou hast done. O God, who is like unto *Thee!!*"

PRAYERS FOR BLESSING.

From the language of praise and holy confidence expressed in the Psalm, we pass to earnest supplication for blessing. The three prayers in which supplication is made, are a beautiful amplification of the apostolic benediction with which our Church closes her daily morning and evening service, and which implores upon her children, as they leave the house of God and mingle in the world again, that they may still be under the protection and safe guidance of that hallowed Name—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—in which they have professed their service. "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Sanctifier, remain with them for ever!"

All our meditations hitherto having been made in the Saviour's name, we first address ourselves to Him in a full assurance of faith. We appeal to all He suffered and all He achieved for us, that He would hear us in mercy and answer us in peace. Did He suffer for us on the cross? we implore Him by those sufferings to save us *now!* Did He by his precious blood redeem us? we beseech Him, by that redeeming blood, to deliver us *now!* and since we know none else to help us, we humbly beseech Him, our Lord, who is the Saviour of the *world*, to save *us*.

The second Prayer of blessing is addressed to God the Father. We approach Him as the "*Almighty* Lord; a most strong tower of defence to all them that put their trust in Him." To induce a practical application of this truth, we are reminded, that "to Him, all things in heaven and earth and under the earth do bow and obey." The events of this world acknowledge his providence; evil angels dread his power, and own his control; whilst good angels, as they alway rejoice to "do Him service in heaven[1], so by his appointment they succour and defend us on earth." What a supporting thought for us in our sickness! how soothing to us in our grief! how animating to our courage, which else might yield under pain, to remember, that under the protection of this great Being, supreme in *power*, we are under the protection of a heavenly Father, supreme in *love!* Nor is it only for the present hour that the Church implores for us this gracious and ready aid. Her's is the mother's care, which provides for *future* wants. She prays, that this "*Almighty*

[1] Collect for St. Michael and all Angels.

Lord" may be our defence in time to come, even for *evermore*. For, however firm in faith we may think to stand in the holy hour of seclusion from the world during sickness; dangers, many and various, may be arrayed against us, when we either return in health to the trials of the world we had left, or be called to man's last trial—death. In either case our heavenly Father is at hand! Fear we not! Are we launched afresh upon the waves of this troublesome world? then his all-seeing providence and grace will guide us; and his love be our consolation. Should the waters of death rage, and "the mountains shake at the tempest of the same;" then his voice, which "*all* things obey," shall be heard above that storm; the waters and the winds shall again be still; or even if they be permitted to rise, they shall not overflow us, but prove the pathway to a holy bright calm of rest, undisturbed and happy for evermore. That this prayer may not be vain; that neither fear may deter us from seeking the blessings it sets forth, nor presumption lead us to claim them, we are further reminded of Him, through whose name alone we "receive health and salvation," —soul and body; through whom alone all our services are accepted; that name which is above every name; that name at which every knee should bow; even the name of "our Lord Jesus Christ;" who liveth ever and reigneth ever with the Father and the Holy Ghost—one God, world without end!

The third prayer of blessing, and that with which the service in ordinary cases concludes, is addressed to the glorious Trinity in Unity. Thus the Church wisely keeps alive in our minds this important truth, that in the hallowed Name, by which at our *Baptism* we

entered into covenant with the Father through Christ, in that name alone can we hope to *continue* therein. Therefore, when in the impressive and affecting language of this prayer she commits us "to the gracious mercy and protection" of God, she addresses each of the three persons of the undivided Trinity; imploring that "the Lord," our heavenly Father, "would bless us" with his *love*, and "keep" us in his way—that "the Lord" Jesus, our Redeemer; the true light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world; "would make his face to shine upon us, and vouchsafe his *grace* unto us"—and that "the Lord" and giver of life, and peace, and joy; the Holy Ghost the Comforter; would "lift up" the light of "his countenance upon us;" not forbearing his *fellowship*, but by his holy influence, "giving us peace both now and evermore."

Thus beautifully is amplified the apostolic blessing, that "the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the "*love* of God, and the *fellowship* of the Holy Ghost "be with us all, evermore."

OCCASIONAL PRAYERS.

"O Almighty God and merciful Father . . world without end."

THE service, for general use, is now closed; but four admirable prayers are added, to be used as circumstances may arise to make them applicable.

The first of these occasional prayers is to be used "for a sick child." And if there be any for whom the Church, collectively and individually, may more hopefully offer her prayers, it must be for those little ones, whom the Saviour regarded with special love, upon *whom He invoked* special blessing, and whom, having

taken them up in his arms, He held out, in their comparative innocence, as examples to his followers, however rich, or great, or wise[1]. None indeed, least of all a mother, can wonder at this expression of tenderness. But if in their health and enjoyments we contemplate children with deep interest, how much deeper is that interest when we hang over them in their sickness and pain. In this trying hour the Church stands forth, the wise friend and monitor, counselling holy and sustaining thoughts, which then best become a creature dependent upon its Creator. She well admonishes us that our first duty is submission to God.

[1] Who ever was found insensible to the interest excited by the presence of little children. Their joyous smile when happy —where is the heart it warms not? even their passing sorrows, transient as a summer cloud, and like that cloud relieving itself ofttimes by sunlit tears—even with these we sympathise. Nor can we watch their opening minds, mark their lack of envy and suspicion, and, above all, their trustful reception of truth on the authority of their parents, without an expansion of heart and a sense of deep interest for them, which it were as unwise to check, as it were impossible not to feel. These feelings may ofttimes be accompanied with perhaps painful, though salutary, recollections, presenting to us what, in the long forgotten past, we ourselves have been; our earliest thoughts, words, and actions; and haply even our young sorrows, as our age advanced to know them. We, perhaps, see ourselves again in that living mirror. Thus David, in his old age, remembered his early days, and that from his youth up he had with troubled mind suffered under an awful fear of an offended God *. Children in the little world around them have their own sorrows, which aid in disciplining their minds to a more patient bearing of the heavier sorrows which surely await them in a lengthened earthly pilgrimage. Unmoved therefore to view them, now all joyousness; heedless because inexperienced; unsuspecting, for as yet they are unmjured; fearing no change, for as yet they know no real ill; undoubting, for never yet has confidence been betrayed: *unmoved* to contemplate them, thus just entering on trial, were *impossible*.

* Psalm lxxxviii. 15. "Even from my youth up, thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind."

Heart-broken as parents must be to behold their suffering child, meet and right is their acknowledgment that "to Almighty God belong the issues of life and death." And to whom is prayer for succour made? even to a "merciful Father;"—and you know his own declaration of love, that sooner shall you forget your children, than He forget them or you[1]. The three petitions of this prayer are framed in pointed reference to your implied trust that He will order all things well, if you unrepiningly leave the issue to Him, the Lord of life and of death. "Visit this child now lying on a bed of sickness; visit him, O Lord, with thy salvation"—take him, soul and body, to thy care; for though Thou art in heaven and we on earth, we know that Thou carest for this little one, and beholdest him with thy fatherly compassion and love—"Deliver him in thy good appointed time from his bodily pain." This we pray, not because we are impatient under thy visitation, but because we look for none other sure help but from Thee. O, "good Lord, deliver him." Perhaps deliverance from sickness and pain may be vouchsafed, by return of health and ease; or it *may* come *not*, as your heart would have it. Sickness indeed may yield and pain cease; but *death* may subdue the one and calm the other. *Then*, all your cry is, that whether in life or in death, he may be the Lord's. O "save his *soul*, for thy mercies' sake." Upon the alternative we still dwell. Who hopeth not to the end? If life and health be restored, then our earnest supplication is, that the fruits of the seed of truth sown in tears, may bear fruit unto holiness; that the recollection of past deliverance, young as he

[1] Isa. xlix. 15.

may be, will prove an abiding motive for goodness; for a stricter obedience to parents, a warmer love to brothers and sisters, a kindlier behaviour towards all, and a livelier sense of duty to God. Nor will these recollections, let us hope, fail to influence him throughout his after-life, but the rather move him to show forth his thankfulness, not with his lips only, but in his life; by giving up himself to the service of that God who raising him from his sickness, "prolonged his days here on earth," and to whom, therefore, he owes that life, which has been twice the gift of Heaven. So may he live to God; and be—what every good man strives to be—"an instrument of God's glory;" "serving God faithfully, doing good in his generation," and witnessing by his life to the truth and power of the Gospel. Should it be otherwise ordered by the Divine Will; should this sickness be unto death, and he die in his youth—the flower blighted in the bud—even then we commit him to the care of the same Almighty Lord and most merciful Father[1].

[1] As few sorrows are at the time felt so keenly as the death of young children, so none seem to bring with them richer consolation. True! it is sad to stand over the features of a loved child, marbled by death. "Is this"—so methinks the bereaved parents bewail themselves—"Is this the end of our long watching, and devoted anxiety? "Has the plant been nurtured with fond care, only that the flower "be blighted at its budding, and mourned with fonder regret! The "very smiles of nature around us do but mock our dark sorrow, and "we can view only the grave of the loved one."—Behold, ye afflicted parents, there is yet joy for you! You retire into your own hearts, and there commune with the great Disposer of events—your Father and your God. In the hour of that holy communing peace returns; for Faith assures you, that all must be ordered well. You are then like one who should haply bide in the sea depths where all is calm and bright, though storm and tempest rage above. Your heart is with your child; and in thought you follow it through the valley &c.

Ours is then the humble but firm trust that a better home—more enduring health, more undisturbed rest, joys more bright, happiness more complete, a communion of hearts more blessed—will be his portion in the world beyond the grave; "received into those *heavenly* habitations, where the souls of them that sleep in the Lord Jesus enjoy *perpetual* rest and felicity."

And on what do we ground our hope that we shall be heard in mercy, and answered in peace? *Not* on the value of our prayers—they, like all our services, are unworthy: not on the virtues of the young sufferer—however lovely they are in the sight of men, before God they can have no merit: nay, not even on his unoffending innocence, if he be still in infancy—touching to our tenderest feelings as it is to mark that innocency; even that is nothing in God's sight; so universally has Adam's sin tainted his posterity. All our cry is for God's mercy; all our trust is the Saviour's merit; all our hope is in the exercise of that mercy for those merits' sake. And can that trust be otherwise than firm? can that hope be otherwise than bright? They each rest on the love of a heavenly Father, who hath committed all power to his Son our

the shadow of death to the garden of life; to a heavenly Eden, where no pains or sickness reach, where its spirit is as calm in new life as its body in death; and where with kindred angels it rejoices for ever in the presence of its God. These are thoughts, by which parents, even in their deepest sorrow, find a soothing. From the turbulence of their grief they pass, thus supported, to the calm of a holy resignation; whilst the hope which, whilst life lingers, they cherished of a few years' longer fellowship in this short fleeting state of woe, has risen into a brighter and more glorious hope of a never-ending communion in the eternal world of bliss.

Mediator; and that Mediator, *supreme*—"living and "reigning with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever "one God, world without end!"

A PRAYER FOR A SICK PERSON, WHEN THERE APPEARETH SMALL HOPE OF RECOVERY.

"O Father of mercies . . . . . Our Lord and Saviour."

In leading us to earnest supplication on behalf of a sick fellow-creature, the Church supplies a prayer, framed in language every way adapted to its purpose. It admirably depicts the feelings of the sick, who from weakness and increasing infirmity are rendered often incapable of giving due expression to their thoughts and feelings; whilst, at the same time, it evinces our own perfect reliance upon God's power to raise the sick, if such be his good pleasure; and our devout submission to his will, if he see fit that this sickness close in death. The sufferer, in this hour of his trial, needs "help and succour:" we therefore seek both from the "Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." The body is weakening, the springs of life are giving way, and no longer able to bear the burden of the flesh, "the outward man is fast decaying;" but the inner man also—the soul—has a life which never dies. We therefore implore Almighty God to strengthen the sick in that "inner man" by his "grace and Holy Spirit;" that his whole mind being free for the work of preparing to meet his God, may be duly exercised in "unfeigned repentance for all the errors of his past life, and stedfast faith in Jesus Christ;" so may "his sins be done away by mercy, and his pardon sealed in heaven, before he go hence and be no more seen." Nor is this the language of despondency even as

to the recovery of bodily health. Our holy confidence in the power of God is avowed, that He, as the Lord, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, is able to do all things; even to raise the sick from the dying couch; yet, since sickness hastens us on our way to the grave, and to all human apprehension the frame appears about to be dissolved; the welfare of the soul, which must pass to its final reckoning when the body shall have joined its kindred dust, is now the one thing above all others needful: wherefore our supplication is, that the Lord would mercifully take to his special care the *soul* of the dying sufferer, and "so fit and prepare him against the hour of death, that after his departure hence *in peace*"—for *that* is the greatest boon which heavenly love vouchsafes to us on earth — "he may be received into God's everlasting kingdom." Even here, none can mistake the perfectly pure faith of our Church. Neither the sufferings of the sick or dying, nor the remembrance of their virtues, nor the merit of their graces, form the ground of our hope to be heard and answered—*That* rests solely "on the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour."

As these words of supplication—*for our departure hence in peace*—catch our attention, when we are on a sick, perhaps a dying bed, consciousness yet remaining; how happy for us, if memory whispers, that in our health we did those things which bring peace at the last; that we did then "keep innocency and took heed to the thing which is right." O God! grant to us all—we implore Thee, for Christ's sake—grant to us a death-bed of *peace!* *That* granted, how little shall we think all our trials, pain, and sorrow. Peace at

the last, is thy crowning mercy. Amen, even so be it, Lord Jesus! for thy mercy's sake!

A COMMENDATORY PRAYER FOR A SICK PERSON AT THE POINT OF DEPARTURE.

The Church, like a tender mother, wearies not of her watchings over the sick and dying. Nay, as life ebbs, and the stream of time bears the soul onward to the great ocean of eternity, still more anxious is her ministration; still more earnest her prayer to the Father of the spirits of all flesh, that He would receive to himself the spirit of the departing sufferer, and not permit the waters to overflow him[1]. How humble, yet how forcible is the appeal on his behalf to the Divine power and mercy! The Almighty is addressed as "a faithful Creator and a merciful Saviour." What thoughts does this language of holy faith and ardent sympathy—what stirring thoughts, does it move in us! 'Surely, O Thou Almighty Creator, and gracious 'Redeemer—faithful as mighty, true as merciful—'surely that which Thou didst at first form, and after-'wards renew, Thou canst not but prize! That which 'thus doubly Thou hast made thine own, *that* must, 'of a surety, be precious in thy sight! Shall thy 'wisdom in forming the spirit of man within him, 'come to nought? Shall thine hitherto unbounded 'grace in providing redemption for the fallen, be 'limited now? O, by thy truth and thy mercy; for 'thy name and thine honour's sake; "we humbly beseech Thee that this soul may be precious in thy

[1] Is. xliii. 2.

sight!"—Hopefully too are we led on in these our supplications. The "Lamb of God that was slain to take away the sins of the world" was "immaculate." But if our sacrifice be "immaculate," it must be perfect; and, if perfect, must attain the object for which it was offered; and as that object was to cleanse all men from their sins, therefore, O God! "wash "the soul of this thy servant, our dear brother, in the "blood of that Lamb; that whatsoever defilements it "may have contracted in the midst of this miserable "and naughty world, through the lusts of the flesh or "the wiles of Satan, being purged and done away, it "may be presented pure and without spot before "Thee." How glorious the Redeemer's triumph! Behold a soul, once forfeit, restored to life, to joy, to glory—the price of redemption being the blood of the Crucified! When these truths fall on the ear of the dying sufferer, even if the fading senses weaken, it cannot be, but that they bear comfort with them to his heart! At peace with God through Jesus Christ his Lord, he walks through the valley of the shadow of death, alone, but fearless: for he knoweth that the Spirit of Jehovah, though all unseen, overshadows him, and will be with him to the end; even till the moment when from this world he passeth to the next, and time itself shall be no longer.

Nor does the Church forget in this prayer to evidence her care of survivors. Having commended the *dying* to the infinite mercy of a reconciled God in Christ Jesus, fain would she apply the present scene to the welfare of the *living*. And what more powerful motive to prepare for our own end, than a solemn conviction, founded upon "this and other like daily

spectacles of mortality, "that our existence is altogether frail and uncertain. 'Must *I* too thus lie, 'worn down by sickness and infirmity?' must *I* know 'what it is to feel the springs of life give way! must 'all *my* opportunities of working out my salvation 'thus close at last! Will others stand around *my* 'death-bed, as we around that of our departing bro-'ther? Must it be that *I* also cease to hear the 'kind voices of those who love me, and pass into the 'valley of the shadow of death, my senses closing to 'all earthly things? O my soul! look to the scene 'before thee! How wouldst thou that thine account 'be with God in such an hour?" -Let us awake to a sense of our real condition, as mortals destined for immortality! Under a conviction of this truth, let us, as in the prayer we implore grace to be enabled to do—let us "so number our days, that we may apply "our hearts unto wisdom;" even "that holy and hea-"venly wisdom, whilst we live here, which may in the end bring us to life everlasting!" Need we warning not to delay our work? Behold our dying brother! Need we encouragement thus to strive for life everlasting? Lo! the spirit of wisdom is ours, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A PRAYER FOR PERSONS TROUBLED IN MIND OR IN CONSCIENCE.

THERE are pains, however, keener than the death-pang, sorrows deeper than the grave—pains, which nothing can assuage but the compassion of "the Father of mercies;" sorrows which none can soothe, but "the God of all comfort." Behold then one, who cannot lay hold of forgiveness; who feels that God

still "writeth bitter things against him," even the handwriting of ordinances! Hopeless, and all unable to cast from him a remembrance of the past, he "possesses still his former iniquities;" a sense of God's just "wrath lieth hard upon him; and his soul is full of trouble!" What a picture of misery have we here! what accumulated trial! Yet even this severity of chastisement is in love to the soul which endureth. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." Like David, he may feel that God is "vexing him with all his storms;" and this state, arising not from impenitence, not from unbelief, not from recurrence to wilful sin, but from a deep conviction of man's utter unworthiness in the sight of God; and as yet not understanding the power of the word in remedying every evil, giving power to conquer every sin, and healing every infirmity. Hence the appropriate object of this prayer, that our merciful God—since "He has written "his holy word for our learning, that we through pa- "tience and *comfort* of the Holy Scripture might "have hope"—would direct his mind to apply those Scriptures to his own condition, and "have a right "understanding of himself, and of God's threats and "promises:" for then he will learn the wonderful and gracious wisdom with which they are adapted to his fallen state; quickening his repentance by the offers of pardon unlimited, strengthening his faith by the display of a perfect sacrifice on his behalf, and brightening his high hopes of heaven, by the final triumph of his victorious Redeemer. Having *this* understanding of himself and of the word of God, he will neither despair under a sense of his sinfulness and demerits, nor presume upon the mercy and long-suffering

of his Heavenly Father. He will not, in lack of faith, "cast away his confidence in God" and hold forth that he cannot be comforted as a penitent, lest, not accepting the hope of pardon and peace, reconciliation and justification, freely offered to him in the Gospel, he lay himself open to the charge of "placing his confidence elsewhere" than in God; and seem to rely even on his self-debasement—a presumption not less daring than if he were to trust to his self-righteousness. "The Word is *Life;*" quickening, strengthening, sanctifying all those spiritual powers which the soul exerciseth. If that life fail, the Word yet standeth sure; and the failure is not there, but in man who applieth it not. The Prayer is continued in a most beautiful and affecting strain of supplication. We implore "our merciful God to give" to the sufferer "strength against all his temptations;" for such is the promise of his word, that he "will with the temptation also make a way to escape [1]." We beseech Him to "heal all his distempers;" and our appeal is to the same word of promise, that He will "heal all our infirmities [2]." And if our hearts are earnest in supplication and prayer for those who suffer from disease of body, with what earnestness must they supplicate and pray for those who suffer from distemper of mind! To be bowed down with dread of unforgiveness; to have hope of pardon withered; to be on the borders of the valley of the shadow of death, and *alone* in that awful hour—alone alike in present sorrow, and for ever! who forbeareth to pray for a soul thus desolate? 'Father of heaven—Lord of all'—supreme in power as infinite in mercy—O God

[1] 1 Cor. x. 13. [2] Ps. ciii. 3.

'Almighty — spare the sufferer! "Break not the 'bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax[1]." Thine

[1] It is impossible to imagine a more affecting scene than that, to relieve the anguish of which this prayer is framed. The sufferer is as one, so eloquently described by the prophet, "walking in darkness," and having in himself "no light*;" no light of hope left. Either conscience is full of gloomy terrors, or the body is weighed down by its infirmities; or *mind* itself—still sadder case of gloom—is *darkened*, and reason is dead or wandering. The prophet's subsequent call to such is, however, no mockery, "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Even where this *deepest* gloom of the mind may darken a Christian's course, the light of the word and the illumination of the Spirit do not unfrequently pierce the darkness, and, for a passing hour, both enlighten the understanding and gladden the heart. There are those who have witnessed the power of the Word and Spirit thus exercised. They have seen how when all else of past life was either forgotten or confused in vague and perverted images, the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise was remembered with reverence and delight—O blessed power of habitual prayer in the mind's day of health! They have seen those wandering thoughts, at all other seasons scattered and tossed about by every wayward impression of a disordered fancy, solemnly collect themselves for prayer. With hands clasped in the wonted form of supplication; with knee bent in holiest adoration; the eye, wild before in all the glare of wonderment at its own imaginings, now calm as in childhood; and the voice, firm yet gentle, ardent yet humble — the suppliant has prayed. Whatever other feeling was dormant, devotion was even quickened—a chord which responded still, when touched to the praises of its God. Well does the writer remember daily witnessing all this, in the case of a dear and aged friend, through a long season of mental suffering, and gratefully does he bear this testimony to the blessed aid of the Church, in her holy services—services, so solemn, so touching, so well *remembered* even by those who had forgotten all else. How do scenes like this shame all those who in their health *will not* serve God; will not *then* live either to his honour or their own eternal welfare! Behold even the *stricken mind* testifies to the power of the Word and the consolation of the Spirit; and in all it *does* know, is wise unto its salvation! How

* Is. l. 10.

'all-seeing eye discerneth the latent spark of spiri-
'tual life, which Thy breath may fan into flame, till
'its light so shine before men even in the death-hour,
'that they shall glorify thy holy name, and bless Thee
'in thy goodness, as they adore Thee in thy power.
'True is it, that most justly Thou mightest visit him,
'and us all, with thy wrath and indignation; yet
'humbly we beseech Thee "not so to shut up thy
'tender mercies in displeasure." It is mercy, not
'justice we plead: and mercy pitieth, where even yet
'justice condemneth. Freely exercise that mercy
'wherein Thou delightest; and mercy *is* thy delight,
'O our God! else had never Saviour been given to
'thy fallen ones. Make then this thy servant "to
'hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou
'hast broken may rejoice;" that he may lift up the
'hands that hang down, and the feeble knees; may
'rally his fainting powers; and learn from this thy
'holy word, "that the blood of Christ cleanseth from
'*all* sin." To Thee, therefore, we look to deliver him

encouraging, too, this fact, to those who cherish habitual piety. Here we see how God may see fit to bless that piety, when the afflicted mind recognises no other influence. O gracious God, how wondrously didst Thou temper thy fierce rough wind* ! Even a life like this—though shrouded in the awful darkness of mental alienation, terrible to the beholder, and fearful to the afflicted soul which suffered it—was by thy mercy neither useless to others, nor without benefit, as we humbly trust, to the sufferer. Behold him, at such intervals of consciousness as Thou didst vouchsafe, bearing witness to the truth and so letting his light even *then* shine before men, that they might well join in glorifying their Father which is in heaven. As they viewed him, looking forward with hope and joy, even from his course of clouds and darkness, to a brighter and a happier state, could they forbear the same view—the same hope for themselves!

* Isa. xxvii. 8.

'from fear of the enemy. O "give him peace" at the 'last, and enable him *finally* to conquer. Little will 'he then heed, however hard be the struggle through 'which he passeth to his victory. The enemy may 'more and more hardly press upon him, may suggest 'more and more trying thoughts as the contest draws 'nearer and nearer to its close; but *Thee* his helper, 'fear yields to courage, doubt to hope, despair to con-'fidence. The light of Thy countenance will both direct 'him to Thy holy word, teach him "a right under-'standing of its threats and promises," and so surely 'comfort him therein, that he shall have *Peace*. And 'we ask this, nothing wavering, but in all the bright 'hopes which *that* faith encourages, which is fixed, 'humbly but immovably, "upon the merits and me-'diation of Jesus Christ our Lord."' — He is our perfect sacrifice; He, our gracious Redeemer; He, our everlasting God. Amen!

CHAPTER XLI.

THE COMMUNION OF THE SICK.

"Almighty, everliving God . . . . Christ our Lord."

When the sick apply for grace and comfort to the holy Sacrament, there is provided a short addition to the Communion Service, admirably adapted to its purpose.

We find the Collect framed, and the appointed Scriptures chosen, with the same tender watchful care, which we have so often had occasion to remark as characteristic of our Church. However strong be

our faith, and well-founded our hope in the season of health, weakness of body, during sickness and suffering, will not unfrequently cause the mind so powerfully to sympathize, that the strongest faith becomes languid, and the firmest hope wavering. The sick man, depressed in spirit and in power, feels as though God had forsaken him: the terrors of the Lord gain the mastery, tempt to a forgetfulness of his love and mercy; and the sufferer is led almost to adopt the fearful language of despair, "My punishment is greater than I can bear[1]." Then it is, that the Church reminds him, in this beautiful and appropriate Collect, that the Almighty and everlasting God doth correct those whom He doth *love*, and chasteneth *every one* whom He doth *receive*[2]. This visitation of sickness and pain is no mark of anger from God, but an indication of that fatherly care for the soul's everlasting good, which willeth rather that his children suffer here for a while, than hereafter for ever. Whatever severity of dispensation *He* willeth, we may be sure is necessary for the purifying our souls for heaven. Therefore there is in the Christian's heart, a perfect and absolute and cheerful resignation to the will of God; an entire trust in the lovingkindness as in the wisdom of his ordering: and *that*, whether the issue of the visitation be life or death. Our prayer is offered in *hope* that God *may* see fit that his suffering servant recover; yet with a full feeling that sickness is a near step to death, and that the highest concern of every individual is to gain such an interest in the great atoning sacrifice, that "whensoever the soul shall "depart from the body, it may be without spot pre-

[1] Gen. iv. 13. [2] Heb. xii. 5.

"sented unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." To sustain the hope that thus it may be with the sufferer now about to communicate, he is reminded of the glorious declaration of the Lord Jesus Himself, that whoso "heareth his word and believeth in him "that sent him, hath everlasting life, and shall not "come into condemnation; but *is* passed from death "to life [1]. It were difficult, even amid the rich treasures of comfort with which the Gospel abounds, to find a passage more impressive, or better calculated to bear up the soul of the dying above the fear of death, and even of judgment—The faithful, "*is* passed from death unto life!" O blessed words of the blessed Jesus! Glory and praise and thanksgiving be unto Thee for ever, Thou mighty Saviour and Redeemer! the everlasting Father! the Prince of Peace!

CHAPTER XLII.

THE ORDER FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

OPENING SENTENCES.

"I am the Resurrection . . . . . shall never die."

The certainty of our own dissolution, and the frequency of that of others whom we survive, unite in giving to death an interest far beyond any other subject which can present itself to the mind of man. When death strives it is fruitless to contend, as it is impossible to fly. Whatever as to this world we fear or hope, enjoy or suffer, covet or dread, will with this world close—the saddest sorrows and the

[1] John v. 24.

brightest joys will here find their end. In the next world, woe or bliss, whichever be our portion, must be our portion for ever. All else is therefore, comparatively, as nothing worth. Hence, whatever can prepare the mind for death, and thereby fortify us against the terrors of it, either for ourselves or others, becomes a blessing. On each of these grounds it is impossible not to acknowledge how much we owe to the sublime service appointed by our Church, "for the Burial of the Dead." The mind of the mourner can hardly have a more salutary exercise than in reading and pondering well the service itself. Not only is it admirably calculated to supply strength and consolation to those who mourn the loss of departed relative or friend; but it teaches survivors how best to prepare for their own call to another state of being. The doctrines therein brought to our view; the glorious promises throughout displayed; the high and heavenly tone of thought and feeling which every line tends to excite and sustain; the heavenly-mindedness to which it leads the soul, having its conversation more in heaven than on earth—these characteristics of the service, though at all times they render it instructive matter of study and meditation, are never so justly prized, never so powerfully impress our hearts, as when the tears of affliction have softened them, and the grave has proved that all of this world is vanity.

And is the loved one dead? shall I no more hear the voice which was wont to welcome me? no more meet the eye of affection which so kindly smiled upon me? Is all still and silent as the grave itself? Is the hand, which used once so readily to greet me, cold and motionless?—Lo! the voice of the Being who

Himself first created us, and who hereafter will create us anew, declares of those we mourn, that "though they were dead, yet shall they live!" and that "whosoever believeth in Him shall never die." Perhaps we weep still; some natural tears will flow; but faith bids us now sorrow not as men without hope. The dead shall live. Nay the believer *never dieth*. This word tells of that Paradise of Rest for the righteous and the penitent, to which the crucified Son of God led the soul of his fellow-sufferer who had ceased to do evil and learned to do well; where the spirit, when freed from its mortality and springing to a new state of existence, joins the spirits of the just made perfect, and there awaits the trumpet call, which shall summon into new life the mouldering dust of ages, when each spirit shall claim its kindred body for consummation of misery or bliss for ever.

Yet is not this all. The word of the Most High giveth even more glorious and animating assurances of the blessings of redemption beyond that period.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth . . . . . not another."

It is much to know that after the death of the body our spirits will still live and repose in the enjoyment of a home, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. It is more to know, that in God's good time—though of that day and that hour knoweth neither man nor angel—the body shall be reanimated by the power of our Redeemer, who, himself ever living, "shall stand at the latter day upon the earth," and shall bid the graves give up their dead, and the prison-house its captives. Then, "though worms shall destroy this frail mortal body," "yet in *my flesh*," formed

anew and made like unto Christ's glorious body, shall I live again, and so "shall see the Lord;" even as the Spirit himself hath written—"I shall see God face to face and know him as he is [1].

"We brought nothing .... name of the Lord.

Still further to withdraw us from a hopeless grief in meditating upon our loss in the death of friends, and to render the mournful scene a matter of salutary reflection, in showing the vanity of all things and the wisdom of not setting our heart on *any* worldly possession, not even upon the dear relatives and friends whose society brightened and cheered our path of life —the third of the introductory sentences reminds us, that "as we brought nothing into this world, neither may we carry any thing out." Such is the condition of human existence. What a stirring though indirect monition is it to survivors that they guard against too much care for things of this world. Behold the end of all man's toil. Riches are to the dead valueless. Greatness—alas! what profiteth it now the corrupting body, that thousands once waited on its owner's will! Wisdom's self can devise no way of escaping the common doom, for worms shall destroy the body of the wise as of the ignorant, of the great as of the lowly, of the wealthy as of the indigent. Yet even in this view of our state, the Holy Scriptures reconcile and even comfort us. All is ordered by our God. It is "the Lord who hath taken away;" it was "the Lord who gave." We do but return to Him what is his own. Therefore there is no murmuring on our lips; no repining in our hearts; no sorrowing as men without hope. The mourner gathers strength and consolation;

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

there is healing to his wounded heart; and his spirit is at length so reassured in faith, so raised above this transitory state by the glorious prospect these Scriptures open of another and a better, that amid his bereavement and his sorrow, he is resigned. The event is of God. Whilst he acknowledges, therefore, that death is our crowning lesson, teaching sternly the vanity of those human wishes which would tempt us to build our all upon the sand—upon the riches, or power, the glory, or even the wisdom of a frail and perishing world—faith sufficiently assures him that all is ordered well; and his meditations find utterance in the firm and expressive language of the patriarch—"Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

PSALM XXXIX.

THE instructive truths which thus fall upon the ears of those, who, a sad train, follow the remains of the departed, need no stronger confirmation than the scene in which they are engaged. Nor can it be, but that their hearts must fill with deep and salutary reflections upon their own mortality, and the wisdom of preparing for the close of that life, of which they see before them sure proof of the shortness and uncertainty. The soul bestirs itself in its proper work—"Why any 'longer should I yield to worldly fears, which so soon 'come to nought? Why cherish worldly hopes, 'which thus fade away? Why be careful for that 'which cannot endure, and covet what no man can 'take with him when he dieth?'—Thoughts like these find fit expression in the Psalm now appointed to be read—'Has life hitherto been passed by me care-

'lessly, heedlessly? Have I acted and spoken as though 'my words and actions were not to be accounted 'for'[1]? Henceforth, I will guard not my actions only, but my words. "I will take heed to my ways, that 'I offend not" even "in my tongue." When God 'afflicts, no murmur shall escape my lips; and when 'man oppresses, no word of anger shall fall from me. 'When sorrows from without or within compass me, I 'will meditate upon the shortness of life, at the close 'of which afflictions cease; and my prayer shall be to 'Thee, O "Lord, to let me know the number of my 'days, that I may be certified how short a time I have 'to live." Upon that shall be my musings; for man 'at the best is vanity. When I shall be borne hither, 'as he whom I mourn, then will it be seen, how often 'I have in life disquieted myself in vain. But "*now*, 'Lord! my hope is even in *Thee*." Wont of old to 'put my trust in the world, I now shame to re-'member the past, and from my very heart implore 'Thee to "deliver me from *all* mine offences, and 'make me not to be a rebuke unto the foolish"—for 'such I shall be, and justly, if, called by thy name 'and professing thy service, I yet love the world and 'trust therein. Nay, O heavenly Father! I am 'dumb before Thee! "It is the Lord! let Him do 'what seemeth Him good." The dead consume away 'in their beauty at thy bidding. O! may my soul be 'resigned to thy holy will. May I feel that "I am 'a stranger with thee and a sojourner as all my 'fathers were;" this life my shelter for a season; 'heaven, my home. And that I may at last reach that

[1] Matt. xii. 36.

'eternal home, let time and grace be vouchsafed 'the more to quicken my repentance, and strengthen 'my faith, and confirm my hope. "O spare me a 'little," that my soul may rally its powers for a holier 'struggle against evil; that, strong in the Lord, "I 'may recover my strength before I go hence, and be 'no more seen" among the children of men!'

What a startling thought!—"to go hence, and be no more seen!"—At the moment of death, to pass at once into a new state of being; all untried and unknown! *Whither* shall I then go? and to *whom?* Well may I implore added time to strengthen and prepare my soul before that day come! I know that the world of spirits will then be all before me; and thither shall I go—but who can determine for me its bounds or tell its wonders? I know, also, that in that world are the spirits of the just made perfect, and the penitent made holy—the righteous Abraham and the crucified penitent; to them therefore, so is my humble trust through Christ, to *them* I shall go: but where is the heart so bold as in its own worthiness to enter among those righteous ones? O for the hour which may, for Christ's sake, haply bear us to them! Behold Prophets and Apostles, saints and angels, a countless multitude, shall greet the faithful spirit, freed from its mortality. The gratulating parents, the husband and wife and children; mother, sister, relative, friend, neighbour; lo! with what joy will they hail us to the shore, as mariners, who, long tempest-tossed, have reached at last the haven of their rest. What then to me that I am about to leave my earthly tabernacle, to tenant the grave; and pass, a disembodied spirit, to new worlds above!—My Saviour hath opened the

kingdom of heaven to *all* believers; Lord! I believe! O grant, then, that as earth passeth away, heaven and its Rest be opened to me—for Jesus Christ's sake!

PSALM XC.

This Psalm admirably carries on the reflections suggested by the former, and is calculated in a special manner to calm and strengthen the mind of the hearer, under the awful view which he takes of that hereafter, of which he must himself one day know all the wonders. The past gives assurance for the future, that the care and goodness of the Lord shall never fail those who trust in Him—He who hath been his servants' refuge through long ages, "from one generation to another;" neither wearieth nor changeth. Thou, O "God, art from everlasting and world without end." What if, according to thy just and righteous sentence of death upon sinful man, Thou turnest him to destruction; his body condemned to the dust? Again Thou sayest, "Come again, ye children of men!" Thou dost recall them to life; here, to a life of righteousness, hereafter to a life of glory, through Jesus Christ thy Son; the Conqueror of death; himself the resurrection and the life. What too, though generations may pass ere the dead shall arise from the dust to their promised glory? Time is nothing to Thee. "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday." Faith therefore is our refuge. We mourners feel that, in this as in every afflictive visitation, thou wouldest fain teach us how transient is all here below; that worldly hopes are like the flower of the field; gay in the bright noon, soon to wither and

fade and die. We feel also that thy chastening hand is upon us, for our good alway. Our very secret sins now spring up, and lead us to repentance. Are we aged? even then the whole tale, or numbering of our years, seems as nothing—hardly longer than the time of its reckoning[1]. And if it please Thee to spare us to the extreme length of man's age, so full of added infirmities does every added year find us, that "our strength will be but labour and sorrow." Wise are they, who fear thee, O Lord, and dread thine anger, and deprecate thy wrath; that by "fearing always," they may gain thy gracious favour[2]." The great secret of a good and peaceful life, is to feel the utter uncertainty of this mortal state, as though every day might be our last; and "so to number *all* our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." That teaching is of Thee, O Lord! O grant us now thy Spirit, that as we weep others dead, we may prepare for death ourselves; ready to give up our account, and not fearful to die. "Turn Thee again, O Lord!" —vouchsafe to us thy mercy and wisdom and grace! We are thy servants! O keep us true and faithful! and in the midst of our adversity and plague, be Thou thyself our Comforter! Let us and our children be evidences, *here*, of the power of thy *grace*; *hereafter*, of the fulness of thy *glory*. Ours is indeed a work beyond our own power—even the working out our salvation. But thy very strength is perfected in our weakness; and in *that* strength is all our trust and all our hope! "Prosper *thou* the work of our hands upon us; O prosper *thou* our handy work."

[1] Psalm xc. 9. [2] Proverbs xxviii. 14.

THE LESSON.

1 Cor. xv. 20.

But what if this life be fleeting; and all flesh as grass! what if man thus perisheth, and the great with the lowly, the rich with the poor, the learned with the simple, mingle in kindred dust? What if the Scriptures, hitherto read in this service, deeply impress these salutary truths; sanctifying the hour of sorrow by bringing survivors to a sense of their own mortality, and relieving its weight by thus reminding them that man lives to die—death, the penalty of life? What if the Church thus lead to thoughts so solemn, and in themselves so subduing? She leads also to thoughts which well may sustain the soul in its trial; and, in the magnificent language of St. Paul, displays all the bright hopes poured forth by that Gospel, which assures us of a resurrection, when our bodies shall be raised again with new life, new powers, new capacities; even glorified bodies, to know death no more. Nobly has the Apostle sustained his argument. He asserts the fact of the resurrection of Christ, and argues from it the certainty of our own; whilst, by most happy illustrations, he answers such doubts as might arise either from the uninformed in their humility, the unbeliever in his pride, or the philosopher in his inquiries; and closes by an application of the doctrine, brief indeed, but so convincing, so practical, so animating, so comforting, that whilst the words fall welcome on the heart, sadness is for the moment cheered, sorrow hushed, and even the mourner rejoiceth in hope. Art thou that mourner?—As thine eye pictures the dead only in the awful stillness of

the grave, does thy soul refuse to be comforted? Dost thou weep one, who, once thy stay, thy solace, thy best earthly comfort, is now borne to the cold dark tomb; dust to dust returning? Weep still; sorrow still; but, O *Christian* mourner, weep as Jesus wept; sorrow not as without hope. You "believe that Jesus died and rose again"—believe also the joyful tidings of the same word, "that them who sleep in Jesus, God shall assuredly bring with him."

Heed the truth, revealed by the Spirit to St. Paul, as he declares both the fact of the resurrection of Christ, and argues from it the certainty of our own. Or are the first fruits no token of the gathering in of harvest? What voice was it, save that of Him, who *did* by his own power raise himself from the dead, which declares the resurrection of all creation to be the great harvest of the world, where angels shall be the reapers, and all mankind shall be raised in their bodies [1]; He himself having been the first-fruits? True, for this great consummation we must tarry the Lord's leisure in a patient faith. "In Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits;" sure token of the harvest: "*afterward*, they that are Christ's, at his coming." What a glorious scene does the inspired Apostle open to us? "Then cometh the end" of the Gospel dispensation, when He—the Mediator between God and man; Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God—"shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father," when having redeemed his faithful ones, and having subdued for ever the power of the evil one, he "shall put down all his rule, and all authority,

[1] Matt. xiii. 39.

and power." So long "he must reign," as a spiritual[1] king in the gospel kingdom, till "he hath put all" spiritual "enemies under his feet;" and "the last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death. For He," God the Father, "hath put all things under his feet[2]," the feet of his Son Jesus Christ: one only being excepted, even the Father. And "it is manifest that *He* is excepted," which, having by his own word "given unto the Son all power both in heaven and earth," himself, "did put all things under him." So when at the last great day the Gospel dispensation shall finally close; death and the grave be conquered by the Redeemer, and thereby "*all* things subdued unto him;" then shall He lay aside his *mediatorial* office, and having fulfilled all his Father's good pleasure, and done all his will, shall shine resplendent in the *Godhead*; "being, as the Son, subject unto him that put all things under him; that *God* may be *all* in *all*," —that, his mediation no longer required, He may be revealed One with Jehovah; himself the everlasting God.

Do the faithful fear lest the hope which springs from these truths bear them too high for all their fond anticipations to be realized? Let them remember that unto this glorious hope they were baptized; therein made children of God through Christ, and fellow-heirs with Christ, as inheritors of the kingdom of heaven[3]. But how can they inherit with Christ, unless they rise with Him? Vainly indeed have you been baptized in Christ, if there be no resurrection! What, *then*, shall they do, who in baptism make profession of this very faith;

[1] John xviii. 36. [2] Psalm viii. 6.

[3] Refer to page 132.

being "baptized for the dead"—for the hope which the dead have in Christ? Why else are they baptized? Why else wait we our time; and tarry, watching; and every hour standing in jeopardy of our lives, till the Lord come? St. Paul declares that spiritually, "he dies daily [1]." He declares that he is unceasingly and strenuously contending with evil from within and from without; with his own infirmities, with the temptations of the world, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with evil men which like wild beasts assault and harm him. But all this his spiritual strife and death unto sin—"what advantageth it him, if the dead rise not [2]?" If we die with Christ,

[1] We have a striking practical view of this spiritual death, in the affecting but high-couraged reflection of a captive, who had drunk the cup of sorrow to its dregs—'I am so afflicted, as might make 'me sometimes even desire to die; if I did not consider, that it is the 'greatest glory of a Christian's life to *die daily;* in conquering by 'a lively faith and patient hope of a better life those partial and quo- 'tidian deaths, which kill us as it were by piecemeal, and make us 'overlive our own fates."—Such was the Christian sufferer's daily death; the spirit of Christ being his strength thereto.

[2] Some of the ancient fathers of the Church, Chrysostom and others, think that this passage is to be taken literally; as though St. Paul had been actually exposed to a real contest with wild beasts in the amphitheatre of Ephesus. Others consider the words to be metaphorical, indicating that, as the manner of men was to expose Christians to the ferocious attacks of wild beasts, so he had been the victim of the wild and furious passion of his persecutors. Perhaps the latter is more in harmony both with the facts to which the passage alludes, and to the usual mode in which St. Paul himself, and the earlier Christian writers who lived in his days, were accustomed to express themselves when speaking of their persecutors and other enemies of the Gospel. Of the Cretians he speaks to Titus, as being "evil beasts"—fierce, and grovelling *. And Ignatius, who was

* Titus i. 12.

with Christ we hope to live; and to live with him, now that He is risen with his body, we must rise also. If *this* world were man's all, this mortal state his final existence—why not at once adopt the course of the unbeliever, who, in his cold and cruel philosophy, would persuade himself and others that no after-life awaits men; and therefore that they are wise who "eat and drink" while they may, "for to-morrow they die." This would be wisdom, if with death, according to their awful view of man, all ends! O, "be not deceived," adds the Apostle; "evil communications corrupt good manners"—thus intimating that all this dreadful fallacy springs from an evil and darkened *heart*, *not* from a darkened *mind*. Unholiness of conduct cannot bear the light of holy truth. The Gospel, which tells that after death comes the judgment, when the risen *body* shall share with the soul, either its punishment for sin, or its recompense of reward for holiness—"the Gospel, which declares such a truth,

appointed to his bishopric by St. Paul, and lived much with that Apostle, describing the persecuting spirit by which he was pursued in his long journey from Antioch to Rome as a prisoner condemned to be devoured by lions—expressly says, that he was "bitten, not by brute beasts, but by savage creatures in the shape of men *." Besides, when once exposed to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre, there was no escape for the victim: to meet the lions was to perish. No contest ever there. The roar which met the victim, was the roar of death.

Either way, however, the Apostle's argument is equally instructive; teaching us, that as in every trial, bodily and spiritual, he could never have sustained his faith triumphantly, but for the assured hope of the resurrection of the dead unto life eternal, so faith in the same truth is at hand to sustain *us* in our trials.

* Ignatius suffered at Rome, being rather more than eighty years old, and was torn to pieces by lions in the amphitheatre, A.D. 107

declares also that a holy life is required in those who would gain such bliss; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord[1]." *Hence*, it finds no welcome: it suiteth not worldliness, pride, profligacy; and *therefore* it is not believed. Nor does the evil stop here. Unbelievers, with devilish malice, would fain lure others into this snare. Be thou on thy guard! heed none of their questioning as to "what the rising from the dead should mean[2]?" The word of God declares the fact; the resurrection of Christ proves its truth: and Christ by raising himself from the grave by his own power, has evidenced that He can raise us also. Shun then those wicked ones: danger is in their presence; for "evil communications corrupt good manners." "My "soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their as-"sembly, mine honour, be not thou united[3]." If, however, thou art one of those who have been sleeping in sin—and the experience of life too surely proves "that *some* have not the knowledge of God;" though where the Gospel light shineth, this ignorance must be "spoken to their shame,"—if thou hast been of those miserable sleepers, "awake to righteousness." The very scene before thee might well startle the sleeper from his fearful dream. Lo! the dead! the dead are before thee! The silence of thy loved one in that stilly death, and the agony of thine own grief, unite in appealing to the heart with a stirring eloquence, mute but importunate; arousing thee with deep and earnest love,—Art thou ready? art thou prepared for that hour, when *thou* shalt be the dead, and others shall mourn *thee*. O, "awake to righteousness," and so awake to hope even in thy death; to peace even in

[1] Heb. xii. 14. [2] Mark ix. 10. [3] Gen. xlix. 6.

sorrow, to joy even in thy mourning! Jesus is risen. Thy beloved ones shall rise. Thou shalt rise to meet them, and part no more. There are, however, those who, because they see men to die, but see them not to rise again, are ready to ask how can the wonder be? "*How* are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" They foolishly think by such cavilling to deceive the unwary, alarm the timid, and win over the wavering. Yet can aught be stamped with greater folly than doubts like these? Behold the husbandman, as he placeth in the earth a seed; "bare grain; wheat, or some other grain." Till that seed die and turn to corruption, no plant springs up; but when that which is sown hath died, then it soon quickens; and, marvellous to behold! there ariseth from the corrupted mass a plant so towering, so beautiful, so full of design in itself, so wondrous in its several parts, so utterly different from the substance sown; that nothing but the evidence of our senses could satisfy the mind, that it sprang from the dry and withered bare grain so lately committed to the ground. Who confesseth not that God giveth it this new body of wonder and beauty? and cannot the same God give to man's body—when having been turned to corruption and dust, it hath passed its mortality—*like change* from death to life, from earthly dross and loathsomeness, to heavenly glory and beauty[1]! And what if, though raised from earth to heaven, man be "made equal unto the angels[2]," he

[1] The conviction of this truth leads us naturally to fulfil those pious offices to the inanimate dead, which testify that we hallow that for which Christ died: *that* for which He rose again; and which also He will raise, that it may be His for *ever*.

[2] Luke xx. 36.

may be well content to share those *degrees* of excellence which stamp all creation; things in heaven and things on earth. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars. One star differeth from another star in glory;" whilst each yet adorns the heavens, and all move to the will and the honour of Him who created them. So also is the resurrection of the dead. All are then changed and made immortal. Our bodies "sown," like the seed-grain, "in corruption, are raised," like the pleasant plant, "in incorruption;" "sown in dishonour," and loathsome in their perishing, "they are raised in glory," lovely and imperishable; "sown in weakness," all strength faileth when life faileth, "they are raised in power;" raised to life which shall yield to death no more: "sown natural bodies," as born in Adam, "they are raised spiritual bodies," as born anew of God in Christ Jesus; and since *His* body, though for a season separated from its spirit, saw no corruption, so "as in Adam, we have borne the image of the earthy," and must therefore die; "we shall also," in Christ, "bear the image of the heavenly," and shall live for ever. But because "corruption doth not inherit incorruption," we must die, ere such corruption can be changed. "Behold," then adds the Apostle, "I show you a mystery." That which the word and Spirit have revealed to *me*, respecting this wondrous and awful change which must happen to us all, when our bodies shall be raised from their graves, be reunited to their kindred souls, and stand forth for final judgment — *that* I declare to *you*. What though now, in the solemn stillness of the grave, our bodies lie, sleeping calmly and undisturbed by the turmoil

of this ever restless world? we shall not so sleep for ever. "We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." Do any find it hard to receive this saying? Bear we in mind, that Time is with God as nothing; a thousand years in his sight being as yesterday. Wherefore, though it hath pleased Him that the appointed numbers of us his creatures should have been created successively throughout long generations; one generation removed, and making room for another; reason herself must allow, that the same power which *thus* created mankind by gradual supply, could have created them at once. It were worse than folly to doubt this position. God therefore *can*, "in a moment, change death to life; corruption to incorruption; dishonour to glory; natural to spiritual bodies." And that which He thus *can* do, He hath by his word and Spirit declared He *will* do. "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Further, we shall as surely be thus raised in our identity as Jesus Christ raised himself in his own body in which He had lived and been crucified [1]. "*This* corruptible must put on incorruption," "and *this* mortal, put on immortality." The living too will be changed [2], from natural to spiritual bodies, from mortal to immortal; to meet their final doom for bliss or for misery. How clearly and how forcibly did our blessed Lord set forth the facts, upon which the Apostle declares these truths. This

[1] Our blessed Lord's earnestness with his disciple Thomas is a striking evidence of this. See page 139.

[2] We are taught that Christ will judge not the dead only, but the *quick*—or those who shall be alive at his coming.

trumpet-call is to come suddenly; "at an hour when we think not of it[1]." It is to come, when men shall be engaged in all the activity of worldly business and worldly pleasure. Hence the Redeemer's startling warning to his disciples; "What I say unto you, I say unto all, *Watch*[2]!" Can any mind realize to itself a sound so appalling, as that of the angel-trumpet when it awakens the myriads of dead now sleeping in their dust, and changes the living from mortal to immortal? And can *I* still live, for a moment, unprepared, unwatchful, unready to meet the God whose judgment then will await me—judgment irreversible? O thou ever present God! Thou God in whose more immediate presence we mourners assemble, as we follow our loved departed to the tomb, and hear thy word of consolation, and pray thy sustaining help, and confess our unworthiness, and implore grace, so henceforth to amend our ways and our doings, that when others listen to these truths, as they mourn us, they may have good hope in remembering that we lived and died in thee!—O God! save us and help us, we pray thee!

The bright and wondrous prospect which these truths lay open, man may rejoice in; yet *duly* to appreciate them were rather an angel's province; human powers see not its extent or its glories. Still, faith firmly holds these truths, and hope rapturously anticipates, for Jesus' sake, one day to know their value and to share their bliss; "for then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is

[1] The suddenness of this final call is very frequently and very earnestly stated by our blessed Lord. Matt. xxv. 6; Luke xii. 40.

[2] Mark xiii. 37.

swallowed up in victory." Their warfare then accomplished, the righteous will be called to receive their crown, the weary will then find rest, and the patient pilgrim meet his welcome; every tear will then be wiped from every eye, for the wicked then must cease their troubling: and "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away;" and the redeemed shall unite in the joyous acclaim, "Lo! this is our God! we have waited for him; and he will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation[1]." . . . Say now, O mourner! hath not the Church led thee to the springs of the waters of comfort? Art not thou ready, for thyself, in the prospect of thine own death; and even for the departed, whom thou lovest better than thyself; to cheer the drooping heart? to "lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees?" and to adopt the animating language of St. Paul, "O death, where is thy sting?" Apart from its consequences as the punishment of sin, death is, in truth, rest from toil, ease after pain, peace for sorrow. *Sin* is its *sting*. Yet where is that sting now? It is drawn. Its strength is the law[2]: but the blood of Christ hath satisfied the law; and even the transgressors thereof are saved, as many as plead his atonement[3]. Then, "O death," again we ask, "where is thy sting?"

[1] Rev. xxi. 4; Isa. xxv. 8, 9.

[2] Rom. vii. 7. "I had not known sin, but by the law."

[3] What a motive to *holiness!* For surely the ungodly and the worldly would not dare to offer such a plea! Folly itself would hardly presume in prayer to implore the love and the mercy of a

'Thine own spirit of malice is rendered harmless. 'The force of temptation may beat us down for a time, 'but we "shall not greatly fall," for thy sting is fatal 'no more. Thou canst not kill, where Christ, by ful-'filling the law, hath made alive.' Death thus is not only unable even to keep our bodies its prey for ever, but is preparing them for a resurrection to a more glorious and eternal life. 'Where then, O grave! 'where is now thy victory? I know that for a season 'thou wilt hold in thy dark mansion my body, brought 'low by death; yet I know also that by this short-'lived victory over me, in bringing my mortal body to 'corruption, thou art but preparing for me an im-'mortal body of glory to spring from it; and by 'thy poor victory over me on earth, art securing my 'rich victory over thee in heaven. Thine is the 'defeat — ours the triumph, long looked for, through 'Jesus Christ our Lord[1].'

And can thoughts like these fail to revive thy drooping spirit, to give it fresh strength, and to supply a more enduring, a more fixed stedfastness? "Stedfast" in the Lord, it will stand like a rock, firm and immovable, drive storm and tempest as they may. The winds may beat against it, the waters rage high and around it, but they shall not prevail to shake it. From amidst this scene of mourning, faith hath pointed to the word of promise, and led thee by its bright light to thy Saviour—no longer incarnate, a man of

Being, who by the *life* of the suppliant was disobeyed, and disregarded, and dishonoured.

[1] Hosea xiii. 14. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."

sorrows, and, like thee, acquainted with grief,—but the sure Saviour of all souls who trust in Him. Guided and cheered by that light thou wilt not despond in thy grief. Rather wilt thou be animated to more active holiness whilst life is spared. Thou wilt abound in the work of the Lord; fruitful in every good word as well as every good work; whilst thine heart will ever rest on the glorious promises of future recompense to the faithful in Christ Jesus; when every man shall receive according as his work hath been; and they who have laboured to the Lord shall of the Lord be recompensed. We "know that our labour in the Lord is not," and will not, and cannot be "in vain."

CHAPTER XLIII.

DEVOTIONS AT THE GRAVE.

As mourners, yet fresh trial waiteth us; and fresh strength is needed. The Church endeavours to supply it by holy and appropriate reflections. Hitherto, as we listened to God's word, teaching us man's triumph over death, we have been in the solemn stillness of his holy house; that "gate of heaven," which *his* presence makes it. This stillness accorded well with our subdued hearts. Now we stand before the very grave which is to receive and hide from our sight even the sad remains of one we loved so well. Our next meeting shall be, when we too have been set free from the body, and have been mingled—O how earnestly at this moment do we secretly pray that we *may* then be mingled!—with the spirits of the just made perfect. Wisely does the Church therefore supply

suitable devotions, and turn our reflections to a consideration of the vanity of this life, our awful responsibility in the next, and the proportionate importance of preparation for that change.

"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay."

This is true of man universally. He liveth but for a short time; and misery is, by nature, his portion. The longest life, when past, appears short, compared with that eternal existence upon which he is about to enter: and that he is born to trouble, each individual feels, for each knows to bear his share of it. Often he "*is cut down like a flower*," scarcely in bloom ere the chilling blast wither it[1]. Nor does he ever

[1] Thus is virtually true with respect to human life in general. How strictly true it is when the young die, mourning parents best can feel! In infancy and early youth, the child is as some flower, ere the summer sun has expanded its glories, or piercing winds have scathed it; fair, and beautiful, and fresh from all the world's impurities. But, alas! 'tis a child of Adam, this fair flower; and in Adam, all die! "What," methinks the bereaved mother exclaims, "is that playful smile of confiding love, fresh and bright, so oft my solace and my joy; the smile which sorrow never dimmed, nor grief shaded; is that smile changed to the stern dark fixedness of death? is the little voice, so bright in its joy, so winning even in its plainings, is that still and silent? Has my beautiful flower "*withered before it be plucked up?*" faded ere its full blossoming! We are indeed mortal, when thus death's shadow darkens the beaming eye of childhood!" . . . . . Thou mourning mother! all this is true! But what if, in his mysterious providence, to convince us that from birth to old age our life every moment is in *his* hands not our own, our heavenly Father strike the young whilst he spares the aged.—O mourning mother! know this; thy child is happier in death than in life! What if sometimes man's course seem smooth and fair; favourable gales wafting him on, and events assuming only that exciting stir which favours activity, animates to exertion, and promotes his wel-

"*continue in one stay.*" All is changing: witness the alternations of prosperity and adversity, health and

fare! Such even course is rare. The Christian, remembering that he is launched "upon the waves of a troublesome world," expects storm and tempest. You doubtless have had your share of such trials; for who long escapes the fearful elements of the strife of human passion? Had your child lived to manhood, in this strife he would have been engaged; and prolonged years would but have proved the fallacy of all human hopes, and shown how soon they pass away. How much sorrow, how much disappointment, how much unceasing anguish make up, to the greater part of mankind, the sum of human existence, they best can tell whose lives are prolonged to age From all these trials your child is escaped, and hath found "wings, like a dove, to flee away and be at rest,"—at rest with that Saviour in death, who in life "took up the little children in his arms, and" endearingly "did bless them." To your infant in its death, gently was "the silver cord loosed *," imperceptibly the waters at life's fountain did exhale, and the spirit passed to its home in heaven with no feelings wounded by the world's cold cruelty, no conscience struggling with sin, no harsh recollections of kindness ill-requited and of benefits ill-prized; no broken confidence, no injured fame, no loss of friendship or of love.

But not only may you be consoled by the consideration, that, however harrowing to your tender nature must be the loss of one so loved, *his* is all the *gain*—other and higher thoughts still present themselves, calculated to enforce a calm and happy resignation to the Divine Will. Even in death your infant may glorify Almighty God† Is your own heart turned more heavenward, now that heaven, as you humbly hope, has received your child! Is your own spirit elevated above the world, its fears, its hopes, its temptations, now that *his* has triumphed over it! In his death is your life more devoted to God?— *Then* is God glorified even in this dear infant! Again; suppose the dead to have reached to childhood, and become companion to others! Your surviving children, brothers and sisters, miss their sweet companion. They weep that the dear one is buried in the cold grave, and can never more see the glorious sun in which they rejoice; never again stray with them over the

* Eccles. xii. 6.

† The view taken by our Church upon this subject is highly consolatory. See the Collect appointed for "The Innocents' Day."

sickness, joy and sorrow. Every thing is progressing towards its end; all of earth, to decay—all of spirit, to eternity: and so quick is this changeful progress, that man "*fleeth as it were a shadow*:" youth gives place to age, and age to death, with a step so silent, yet so sure, that watch as we may the advance from one to another, "*the last*" comes at an hour when we think not. Happy is it when, as time wears on, they to whom a lengthened life is vouchsafed grow old in virtues as in years,—can recall the past without

fields, and pluck the gay flowers, and rejoice in the bird-songs they so often had listened to together. They ask you of the dead—"where is he now?" O, then what bright opening have you to exalt God's honour by raising the tender affections of your children from earth to heaven. That tears are your first answer to the heart-moving questioner, who shall wonder? No cold philosophy bids forbear. This rational expression of sorrow is ordained for the relief of the o'erburthened heart. *You* weep. *Jesus* wept. Our tears for the dead are therefore sanctified!—thanks to *his* tender love, who "in all our afflictions is himself afflicted." But amid your tears the smile of resignation glows, calm, and peaceful, and happy. You remember that, upon the generous minds of the young, few motives for virtue are so strong, as the thought that by being *good* they are living as the dead would have them live, and may hope one day to join them in the mansions of the blessed. Upon this feeling you will act, and direct their inquiring minds to dwell upon the happiness of the good, upon the misery of the wicked, both in this life and the next. "Your labour," thus declared, "will not be in vain in the Lord!" Your own spirit too can still hold communion with the dead; for as angels' bliss is "to praise the Lord;" so the faithful on earth do then share the bliss "of angels, and archangels, and all the company of heaven," when they live to the glory and honour of their God. Thus you strive to lead on both yourself and your children nearer and nearer to God here, in the soothing hope that you are all drawing daily nearer to the loved one. Every day well spent is a step to your reunion. Thus whilst Nature weeps the flower, cut down here on earth; Faith looks to that heaven where still it blooms, and where it will bloom for ever.

pain, and look to the future without fear. Behold one such, "sound in faith and patience[1]," calmly awaiting his end, when the heat and burden of life's toilsome day be past. In the secret chamber of his heart he communes sternly with himself. 'My 'departure is at hand! Am I ready? In the grave 'there is no knowledge or device whereby I may 'secure my salvation; *that* work, if done at all, must 'be done *here*. Let me then watch and pray, even 'to the end patiently. So may my prayer be an-'swered by the quiet close of a well-spent life; so may 'I have grace to walk with God, in the filial reverence 'of Enoch; to be firm with unshrinking Abraham; and 'with confiding Jacob still to hold my trust in the Lord.' —When "the hoary head is thus found in the way of righteousness, it is," indeed, "a crown of glory[2]:" and men, as they rejoice in the example of the aged righteous, and take courage from it to stand to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, shall rise up and call him blessed. To impress this truth more strongly, and to draw from it a more practical lesson of piety, the Church adds the following sentence:

"In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased."

Since the world is thus changeful, who can doubt but that "*in the midst of life we are in death?*" Hence it is, that God occasionally so wills, that either the young are removed like a budding flower cut down; or "one dieth in his full strength;" startling us from our dream of security. How often indeed do we see that

[1] Titus ii. 2. [2] Prov. xvi. 31.

to the aged, the infirm, the sick; who remain for long years, perhaps, under pain, and distress, and agony; existence is prolonged: whilst death in some unlooked for moment strikes the young, the healthful, and the strong. Marvellous, O God! are thy doings; and "thy ways past finding out." Amid however the stern certainty that death is at hand, and the awful uncertainty when its hour shall be, surely it were wisdom's part to think from what source we must seek succour! To seek it from the world and our fellow-creatures were a miserable folly; for what power hath man over death? Can riches purchase health to the sick? Can power cause pain to cease? Can the wisdom of the world speak peace to the troubled mind, or heal the wounded conscience? Can even love and affection prolong for one moment the life which God's summons hath demanded? "*Of whom then may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord!*" The Lord alone is supreme over death. But conscience whispers that He, "*for our sins is justly displeased*[1]." What?

[1] Perhaps, some one of those present at the grave is conscious of having fallen from his stedfastness. Once walking with God, as a man with his friend, his heart was happy, for it concealed no evil; he shared every thought with his Father in heaven, and the Holy Spirit bore witness with his spirit, that he was of the children of God. Lo! he finds added misery at this mournful hour, in the recollection of lost tranquillity! But, though sad, his musings may be salutary. Under this feeling of misery, wretched for the time, and pitiable is his state. Yet is it hopeful. The soul is touched by its convictions; courage gradually is excited — courage to repent and amend. "I will arise and go to my Father." This sense of evil; this disposition softened to tears of penitence; this hatred of sin; this desire after holiness; this dread of an unprepared state; this longing after holiness—All is in proof that the Almighty has

do our sins array themselves against us, as we stand at the grave of a departed friend, and do we feel *then* that they have displeased the only Being who can help us in our hour of need! Reader! if as the death of others warns thee, thoughts like those rack thy soul *now*—what must be the agony which thy sins will inflict, if they remain unrepented till thine own death! For with a still more vivid recollection will long buried thoughts rise up in hurrying succession, present themselves at your *dying* hour, and crowd the last moments of expiring life, either for peace or for disquiet; as they shall rise, sins repented of and forgiven, or offences unconfessed and disregarded[1]! If to thine own conscience they bring torment, how can they not cause your God to be "justly displeased!" Resolve from this moment to amend—"Turn thyself and live[2]!" Consider further; if now, in thine hour

compassionated his contrition of heart, and by his Spirit would restore him. 'O Father, be Thou then henceforth my guide, my sanctifier, 'my comforter! When again my home receives me from this mournful 'scene, to Thee on bended knee will I pour forth my prayer, and 'commune with my merciful God, who, though He has been justly dis- 'pleased for my sins, now smiles again upon me; and again all is 'peace—O! where might I now have been? The grave, which has 'closed over another, *might* have closed over *me* in my impenitence! 'O God, great is thy mercy! Well do I rejoice in my escape, and 'devote myself to Thee henceforth, and for ever!'

[1] 1 John i. 8, 9.

[2] Ezek. xviii. 32.—Many a determined spirit, daring though it be in the season of health and joyousness, quails in the prospect of sickness, sorrow, and death. Actions, words, thoughts—all disapproved of conscience, but long and carefully put aside by the activity of industry or the hurrying of pleasure—no sooner find a comparative calm, than they stand forth in their true character, bringing terror and dismay: whilst sins which, committed in the recklessness of passion or under the deceitful temptation of an evil heart, hitherto have passed unheeded,

of *mourning*, fear chills the heart from the newly-felt conviction that God is displeased, what terror, what horror will succeed, if the same fear agitate the soul in thine hour of *death!* Is "the exceeding sinfulness of sin" *now* confessed? Is the mind *now* tremblingly alive to the knowledge of God, as a Being to whom sin is hateful, and who will justly punish it? does the conviction of a sinful state terrify you in the prospect of its awful recompense, at the great after-reckoning —with what added force will *those* feelings harass thy soul *then*; when, if consciousness be spared thee, a thousand sins, suppose them unrepented, will crowd thy memory, and inflict a living death! With what accumulating terror will you offer up the prayer, which next presents itself!

"Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death"

O my God! any sufferings here let me endure, so that I am spared punishment hereafter! Here, however severe, and agonizing, and lengthened these sufferings be, yet shall they have an end. Time itself shall be no longer. But, O! that *Eternity!*—that '*never-ending!* . . . . that "worm which dieth not;" 'that fire which is not quenched; that misery to

now vainly seek further subterfuge, vainly contrive further disguise, vainly stifle further reproaches. The grave, which has already opened for the dead, may soon open for the mourner, and then . . . . . each heart asks itself the question, "Whither shall *I then* go!"—Happy hour! Happy even the hour of mourning and of sorrow like this, if, as the question sinks deep in the heart of one convinced of sin, it abides there, and is there duly pondered. God grant his grace to turn that heart to righteousness!

'which there is no alleviation; that pain to which 'there is no mitigation! "*O Lord God, most holy!*" 'let thy spirit of holiness be even *now* vouchsafed to 'me! even now let it sanctify me; let it bring me to 'the foot of the cross, and make me a meet though 'unworthy partaker of the atonement which is in 'Christ Jesus, who there "died for sinners." I know 'that this thou *canst* do; for thine, "*O* Lord *most* '*mighty*;" thine is the power. Exercise upon me 'that power! Bring my erring soul to a lively 'repentance, a saving faith, an acceptable obedience. 'O Lord! still further do I pray. I appeal to Thee, 'as my "*most holy and most merciful Saviour*," who 'didst thyself die, that I might live! Let not thy 'death be in vain for *me!* Lord, I repent; I believe; 'I obey! in mercy pardon me on my repentance, help 'me in mine unbelief, accept me in my obedience; 'and "*deliver me not into the bitter pains of eternal* '*death.*"'—Do thoughts like these rush to your soul? In such an hour and under such feelings, at the moment when whatever embers of religion smoulder in the heart kindle into holy flame, the truth flashes across you with a vividness never experienced before, that sickness, sorrow, and trial, are mercies in disguise; and that "whom the Lord *loveth*, he chasteneth." As a mourner, grief is your portion; but you have examined your own heart; you have detected the sins concealed there; you have judged your own self; you have confessed your sin unto God; and, though with tears of sorrow, have in penitence found peace. You have learned at length, to your joy, that since in this our state of trial hope supplies the place of assurance, and faith that of knowledge, so repentance you humbly

trust will, for Jesus' sake, be accepted for sinlessness. Thus to you the waters of affliction have proved blessing; like the waterflood on the far-spread valley, they have softened and fertilized the soul, that its fruit fail not in due season. Nor do you now fear even a heart-searching God; such is the magnanimity of faith. Nay, you boldly appeal to the omniscience of your Creator to judge your sincerity.

"Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts; shut not thy merciful ears to our prayer; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee."

'Tis a bold appeal this! You invite the scrutiny of a "*heart-searching God!*" As with the Apostle, so with you — "What carefulness is wrought! — yea, what clearing of yourself[1]!" The contemplation of the death-scene before you, and the prospect of your own death have worked this trust in the Divine mercy; exalting and purifying your soul. There is no test of sincerity like death. Salutary has been thy view of it. And who shall doubt a gracious answer to this prayer? Shall God "*shut his merciful ear to thy prayers?*" O never, never! "Call upon me in the time of trouble; *I will* deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me[2]." These are words written by his Spirit; and their consolation is your's, in this the day of your trouble. He has already removed the misery of sin, which is spiritual sorrow. Fear not! He will deliver you from *every* sorrow, in his good time. He *will* "*spare you.*" By his *holiness*, by his *might*, by his

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 11. [2] Ps. l. 15.

mercy, to which you have appealed, He will grant you his strong salvation—for is He not the Saviour of all who trust in Him?

As these thoughts crowd upon the o'erwrought and agitated mind, deriving added force from the sad occasion which gives rise to them; as moreover when we behold the opening grave, and the dear remains of the departed ready to be consigned to it, our own death-scene appears at hand and almost realized, each of us, with an intensity of anxious care never felt before, naturally ponders what *his own* last hour may be. Shall *I*, *then* have faith which will fail not? shall I have hope which will weaken not at the last? shall pains of body master my powers of mind and withdraw me from the sustaining consolations of devout intercourse, or shall they be lost in a calm and holy communion with my Redeemer and my God! The *last hour!* It has been to others. It must be to *me! Soon* it *may* be; and then shall I pass to my eternity. I know that for such an hour there is none other help but the presence of the Lord. O Father! let me have the power, as well as the will *then* to hold me fast by Thee—"to *stay upon* my God." O grant me enduring fortitude! O "*suffer me not at my last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee.*" So I may fearlessly pass the boundary which separates me now from the world of spirits; and, undismayed even in the valley of the shadow of death, be guided safe by thy rod and staff comforting me, till I reach in safety, in peace, and in joy, that distant world, where we *must* be; and *be* for *ever*.

THE BURIAL.

"Forasmuch . . able to subdue all things to himself."

But not only does "the dust return to the earth as it was;" "the spirit" freed from its clay, "returns unto God who gave it[1];" and we believe it to be of his great mercy that He hath taken to himself the "soul of our dear departed." In this faith we fearlessly "commit his body to the ground." For what if earth thus mingle with its kindred earth; ashes with ashes, dust with dust; God's word tells of better things to come. The "hope of the resurrection to eternal life is sure and certain, through Jesus Christ." Prophets and Apostles have declared it, and Jesus rose again and ascended into heaven that we might rise and ascend thither also[2]. To this end our bodies shall from corruption rise to incorruption; "mortal shall put on immortality;" and as we have borne the image of "the earthly" Adam, we shall also bear the image of the "heavenly;" and "our vile bodies shall be made like unto Christ's glorious body." Thus are the angel bodies pure and glorious, unfading and immortal. As the mourners listen to these truths, and cannot but also hear the harsh and startling sound of earth already mingling with its kindred earth—the body in very deed consigned to its dust—they almost exclaim, "How can then this promised change be? How,

[1] Eccl. xii. 7.

[2] John xiv. 3. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Language can convey no stronger assurance.

after ages perhaps have passed, how can these elements be collected, formed anew, re-animated, and so created again, that they shall perish no more? At that moment, in its wise and holy sympathy, the Church, presupposing the sad reflection to have arisen, declares that hope may triumph, asserts its reasonableness, encourages its adoption, and shows that the power that wills it, is omnipotent—even "*His* mighty power, who hath subdued *all* things to himself." Thus the passing cloud, dark though it be, passeth away from the mind; the mourners still stand, in present grief indeed, and in sorrow deep and heartfelt, whilst they behold the dust and earth mingling with the ashes of the dead; but the eye of faith is fixed on the certainty of that glorious hour, which, through Christ, shall change mortal to immortality. Who shall doubt this "power of our Lord Jesus Christ!" He "by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made that was made;" He "to whom all power is given in heaven and earth;" *He* was "the grave's destruction;" He who, though once He visited that yet unseen region, could not be holden there, neither did see corruption—*He*, who thus "subdued to himself all things," even death and the grave, can create again and fashion anew according to his will, the body which He created first; though death for a time master it. He is Lord of death as well as of life; and having once exercised his divine power by raising *Himself*, in the exercise of the same power He will at last raise *us*. When therefore we commit to the ground the beloved dead, we know that they will live again. Thus cheered, and his view raised from the dark prospect of the grave and the vileness of

dust and ashes with which the body of the loved one now sleeps, to "the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ" —the mourner pauses for a moment to offer his secret prayer, deep and fervent, that when this hope of the resurrection shall be realised, and all men shall rise and give account of their own works, *he* may himself be found among the number of the *blessed*.

WHO ARE THE BLESSED?

"I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, From henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: even so, saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours."

But who are they that shall inherit the blessing?—even they who "die in the Lord:" they, whom death finds watching and ready for their change, clothed in the righteousness of Christ the Lord. Say, O mourner! say, is death to them curse or blessing? If still thou weepest, for thine own loss thy tears must flow. The dead are at *rest*. What joyful sound this to the hearts of those who loved them! Shall then the dear ones whom we mourn have nothing which shall again disturb their quiet? Shall they for ever know only the holy peace and the bright calm of heaven? What a glorious hope! Rest from their labours, *for ever!* Hear this, ye children of sorrow! Hear it, ye who are poor and distressed, and of the world forsaken! Hear it, ye that are "any ways afflicted, in mind, body, or estate!" In all your struggles with a stormy world; amid all the stern realities of life which, were this state of being your all, would rend the stoutest heart; amid all those trials of

ill-requited kindness, of undeserved enmity, of disappointed hopes, which the generous, and the kind, and the noble mind most keenly feels; amid the struggles of your own heart to subdue its evil, to correct its errors, to remove its infirmities; amid all your trials from without and from within—Lo! the welcome truth! Rest is there for *you* also, if ye die in the Lord! The poor "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water[1]." To impress upon the mind more vividly the *nature* of this *heavenly rest*; calm and unruffled, bright and unchanging; the inspired St. John describes heaven itself "as a sea of glass like unto crystal," and declares that he saw there revealed to him the blessed, "who had gotten the victory," "standing upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God[2]." The oppressed and persecuted shall no more be harassed; for even "the *wicked* there" *must* "cease from troubling[3]." The weary of this world's strife shall find all their untiring patience, their noble self-denial, their generous bene-

[1] Rev. vii. 16. [2] Rev. iv. 6; xv. 2.

[3] It is not unworthy of remark, that when the patient Job, contending with his accumulated afflictions and cursing the day of his birth, drew his striking contrast between the restless misery of this world, and the calm peace of the next, he specifies as one of the glorious blessings awaiting in heaven the righteous dead, that "*there* the wicked cease from troubling"—thus teaching us that *here* they cease *not*. How powerful an argument does this thought supply for the exercise of our patience, when called to suffer from feelings injured, motives maligned, honour vilified, truth falsified; or from any other mode of persecution which the wicked, in their envy, hatred, and malice, may haply heap upon us. The wicked indeed, thus viewed, are as a scourge in the hand of God to try and prove his people, whether

volence, their long bearing with the malice of the envious and the scorn of the proud—all well-rewarded; for they shall find *Rest*. Wise then and happy they who prepare to *die* in the Lord, by *living* to the Lord! whose life, passed among men, but as before God, is open to his heart-searching eye; and being regulated by his word and Spirit, is ordered with a view to please Him, both in will and deed. Whoso thus lives by faith in Christ, may humbly trust to die with hope in Christ, and fail not of his blessing. O, what a change for the righteous dead! All struggle ended; all anguish passed away; a world gained, where care and crime and withering never come; their home in heaven reached; their's is perfect, unclouded, everlasting rest[1]! . . . Thus too the righteous dead are twice blessed! blessed in their

they be faithful. Blessed they who shall endure unto the end! The sufferings of the faithful, like the triumph of their enemies, must be short and transitory: their reward eternal.

It were well if the cruel-hearted persecutor would look to this end of his success. His victims are dead—out of his reach now. But what fruits of his triumph are left to *himself*? What now does he feel of enmity? rather what remorse does not the recollection of his enmity inflict upon him! O, what would he not give to recall the dead, that if only one kind word might pass between him and his victims—if the forgiving and forgiven might say farewell in peace! Nay, if among the attendant mourners, there be one who hath enmity in his heart against any of his fellow-creatures, now is the time for him to root it out. Soon thou shalt be consigned to thine own narrow home in the grave. Thou knowest how little thine enmity profiteth thee *now*—Ask thine heart, what will it profit thee *then*!

[1] Surely it is no vain thought, that a foretaste of this rest in heaven is granted the righteous in their death, 'ere they leave their earthly tabernacle. As the soul hovers between the two worlds, and, like a bird poised high in air ere it speeds its flight, they may see unveiled the bright glories of their home, and though to your voice

own bliss; blessed also in the consolation they bequeath to survivors! The fountain of tears may well cease on earth for those who find every tear wiped away in heaven. The inexorable past, indeed, will raise up scenes of virtue and of love, gone for ever; scenes, in which parents and children and relations and friends joyfully mingled their hearts with all the fulness of approving affection—but the past is of earth. The future still rises ascendant, and unveils scenes of virtue made perfect, and love made immortal, where those you mourn shall have angels for their companions, and find their God their glory. Mourner, henceforth weep; but *not* for the *dead*. Tears are left for *survivors*. The dead in the Lord are blessed.

of sympathy and lamentation, the failing senses respond not, other voices, all unheard by you, may give assurance of that peace which *they* have—whose "souls are in the hands of God." Thus let us hope that in the awful passage from time to eternity—from a world of sense to a world of spirit—strength, and consolation, and even bliss may be the portion of the righteous; till freed at length, they spring to the liberty of unencumbered spirits, are hailed by the spirits of the just already made perfect, and share with them their joy. You mourn the friend, dead. He rejoices. Your lamentations tell your grief His hallelujahs proclaim his joy.

To scenes like this, how dreadful the contrast presented by the death-bed of the impenitent. Suppose a wicked man to feel the heavy sleep of death overpowering him, in a state of sin unrepented. —O what must be his pangs of agony! Remorse, hitherto driven away from time to time, and allowed no entrance into his mind, now asserts its sway; and all the sinfulness of his sin casts its dark shadow around him, with a power irresistible as it is dreadful. Well does the prophet, speaking of impenitence, in one word picture the dreadful scene: "There is *no peace*, saith my God, to the wicked" Is. lvii. 21.

THE INVOCATIONS.

"Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us."

Are the righteous dead thus blessed? Who of us would not for himself share that blessing?—Our Church, knowing that such must be the secret heart-felt desire of every soul, leads the congregation to invoke God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that He would be pleased to pour upon them the abundance of his mercy: so sure is the conviction that to his mercy must we all look for grace so to live to the Lord, that we may die in the Lord. We implore the *Father* to behold us his children; and to have mercy upon *his own*. We implore the *Saviour* to look upon his redeemed; and not withhold his mercy from *them*, in love to whom He died. We implore the *Holy Ghost*, the Lord and Giver of life, mercifully to shed abroad in our hearts his holy influence; so to sanctify us in life, that at death we be meet for our bliss in heaven. How considerately has our Church framed this part of the service! Aware that immediately upon the entombment of the dear departed, the thoughts of the assembled mourners would be too deeply absorbed in their grief, at once to gather strength for continuous prayer, she takes care that the first supplications at such a moment should be in harmony with their agitated feelings—concise, yet awakening, and bearing them to their God. For to whom else can they flee at such a moment? That heart must indeed be hard and worldly which then is not fixed on God and heaven. Then too, if ever, is felt in

all its force, *this* truth—that *mercy* is the sinner's plea. O "Lord, have mercy upon us," for Thou art our Father! O "Christ, have mercy upon us," for Thou art our Lord, and our Redeemer! O "Lord, have mercy upon us," for Thou art our Sanctifier, and our Comforter!

Leading us on, like a sympathising parent; even as you, a mother, would lead your sorrowing child, by a gentle restraint upon any grief which had overpowered him, to proper exertion and a gradual return to those active habits which grief had suspended;—having moreover by these short ejaculations for mercy brought the mourners to the footstool of God's throne, and placed them spiritually in the presence of their heavenly Father who dwelleth there — the Church directs and encourages them still further to pour forth their hearts to Him in that form of words, with which we may justly encourage ourselves in trusting that He is well-pleased, for the sake of the gracious Being who taught them to us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

"Our Father, which art in heaven, . . . from evil. Amen."

Lo! the comforting words, "*Our Father* which art in heaven!" Perhaps you are a son, mourning a parent. Be it so; and weep. But, remember, you are not orphaned. You have a Father still: and HE *is* "*in heaven*," and there, with Him, as your hope is, the dead you mourn, now lives. Is it then mocking thy grief to bid thee be comforted? Perhaps you are a parent at the grave of your child. Did you glory in the character of a son, high in christian honour, firm in christian truth, noble in christian virtue? or did

you delight in the fair christian graces of a duteous daughter; all in all to thee? her radiant smiles gilding the evening of your life, soothing you amid sorrows, ever studying your comfort, and winning your esteem as she riveted your affection? and is *she* gone? cut down like a flower? Did you love these children?—Start not at the hard question. You *did* love and love well! witness a mother's tearful sobbing at their grave; witness a father's deep, still agony! Yet listen to the voice of consolation. Your children have still a Father's love; a love, filling their souls with a measure of happiness, of which the fondest imagination dreameth not, and which the tenderest parental heart cannot conceive. Theirs is now the love of One, whose power to bless is not more above your power, than his love is greater than yours; even the love of a *heavenly* Father. Where *He* loves, there is *Heaven*; and *there* rest your children. The privilege indeed of thus addressing *Almighty God*, in this hour of wretchedness, as our *Father*, is every way full of consolation. Do you mourn a husband? The Almighty reminds you that you are under his more immediate care. He is the God of *all*; the Preserver of *all*; but He is declared to be, in an especial manner, "the *God* of the *widow*[1]." The more unprotected you are in a world of strife, the more surely will He be with you; your guard and guide amid your difficulties: a Father to your fatherless children, and your own sure refuge and defence. In his gracious and tender lovingkindness, his promises fail not, but are most full to those who most need, and his aid most ready to those who have none else to help them—from the fatherless in

[1] Ps. lxviii. 5. and cxlvi. 9.

childhood, to the failing strength of age, "even to hoar hairs will I carry you[1]"—saith this your *Father*. Perhaps you are a fond sister weeping a brother gone; and at the grave you address God as "*Our Father!*" Cherish the welcome thought, that he, the dead—with whose love you had associated that name in your prayers, from early childhood, when together you lisped the words, and your gentle voices were then also together heard in heaven—he has still the same God for his Father; though he needeth not now your prayer for blessing. He *is* already blessed in that Father's presence, and that Father's love; and, rejoicing to remember that he left thee walking in the fear and love of God on earth, he waits in joyful expectation of meeting thee, when, in thine appointed time, thou shalt thyself share with him that divine love, and with him partake of that eternal felicity in the same bright world he dwelleth in[2].

With hearts thus re-animated, the mourners, in

[1] Is. xlvi. 4. Refer to the passage. Comfort is in every word of it.

[2] It is sufficiently evident, from the parable of Dives and Lazarus, that the spirits of the departed bear with them a full recollection of the state of those whom they left on earth; and this is perfectly consistent with the suggestions of our reason. For as it were impossible to believe an annihilation in death of the various powers of thought which distinguish man from all other creatures, so we infer naturally, that those powers, when the exercise of them is no longer controlled by the union of the soul with the body, will be expanded and enlarged and strengthened beyond any point which now we can conceive of. Recollection, therefore, of the past, will be but more vivid; and as Dives, with an awakened sense of the inexpressible horror of sin, remembered with agony the evil course of his five brethren who survived him, so every happy freed spirit will remember with joy and gratitude and hopeful anticipation, the holy cause of the righteous ones who now, as survivors, mourn. Peace, and joy, and glory await them. What a stirring motive this, to strive for heaven!

whatever relation to them the departed may have stood, proceed from their very hearts to offer the several petitions of this prayer. O, Father in heaven! "*hallowed be thy name!*"—O the comfort of that endearing name to us now! Holy and reverend shall it ever be! We will honour it, even though Thou hast laid upon thy children thy heavy hand. We forget not that "we had fathers of our flesh which corrected us; and we gave them reverence," because we knew that they loved us, and corrected because they loved. Shall we not much more "be in subjection to Thee," and "hallow thy name," as "the Father of spirits, and live?" How can we forbear to reverence it, and to acknowledge thine honour in it! Yea, a deeper sense of thine awful name *now* fills our hearts, for unto thy holy presence, as the "Father of the spirits" of all flesh, has the departed spirit passed; and in the same presence must we soon ourselves stand. May "*thy kingdom come!*" And shall that kingdom surely come? an everlasting kingdom of peace? What now to us the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them? Lo, in death, they all are vanity! The crowned head and the houseless wanderer then tenant their common home, the grave. But *thy* kingdom—*that* is worthy the ambition of the highest, and it is free to the strivings of the lowliest. I feel its value now, in all its fulness, in all its brightness, in all its glory; and this solemn scene argues its certainty with a silent but startling eloquence, which scatters every doubt, and wings our hopes to gain it. O, the blessed privilege of Christ's faithful followers! to know that *He*, their merciful Redeemer, their risen Saviour, their everlasting God, "hath opened this

kingdom of heaven to all believers!" That must be a heart of stone, which sympathises not with the mourners as, struggling with their grief, they look on the buried dead, and raise to God their prayer of submission; "*Thy will be done!*" With what painful effort; with what self-control must the bereaved parent, the fatherless, the motherless, the widowed wife, the forlorn husband, sister, brother, severally pour forth such a prayer! Nature would at once prompt the affecting exclamation of their agonized Master,—"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" but grace bends the soul rather to the Saviour's submissive close to his sad thoughts, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." Ponder well, too, O mourner! that when you were wont to pray recovery for the loved one in sickness, you ever added the petition that *God's* will be done,—not *your own*. And will you not bow submissively, now that it *is* done, though not as your tender love would have had it accomplished? Yet not only does Faith counsel the heart to a ready submission, and with the holy courage of the patriarch rouse our resolution "to trust in God though he slay us[1];" there gleams from these dark clouds of sadness one bright steady ray of comfort, rising from the very event you are now deploring; and the very perfection of obedience to which you pledge yourself, supplies the grounds of its consolation. Thy will be done, "*on earth, as it is in heaven*," —so runs your petition! Think for a moment! *How* is God's will done in heaven? and, by *whom?* It is done unreservedly, unhesitatingly, cheerfully, happily.

[1] Job xiii. 15.

It is done by angels, and by those, the spirits of the just made perfect, henceforth associated with angels; and among them, by the very being you are now mourning. Even as you stand weeping at the grave, and by a holy submission do God's will on earth, we trust that the freed spirit of the loved one here departed, is doing that will in heaven. You, both, are engaged in doing the same glorious work. With you, every murmur checked, every plaint stilled, every holy resolve to obey the Lord your God, unite in bringing you to the obedience of angels; and you thereby share, though on earth, the higher and more glorious services of the loved one in heaven. But "how is my soul to be strengthened for angels' resig-"nation under suffering like mine?"—So methinks the mourner pondereth. Know then, that man liveth by "the bread that came down from heaven;" and for that if he daily prayeth, daily will supply be given for each day's need. Surely, "as thy days," O mourner, "so shall be thy strength[1]." With what added fervour then you offer the next supplication; "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" Of bread to sustain bodily life you acknowledge gratefully your dependence upon the good providence of your heavenly Father to grant needful supply; but the deeper sense with which this scene impresses your mind of the vanity and shortness of life, makes you less thoughtful for the morrow, as to all which this world can give. 'The dead 'take nothing away with them when they die. I will 'seek the bread of life *first*; for that is the one thing 'needful to sustain my soul and quicken it for immor-

[1] Deut. xxxiii. 25.

'tality. O Father, "give us this day our daily bread," 'to strengthen us for the trial thereof. True, "thou 'hast fed us with the bread of tears, and hast given us 'plenteousness of tears to drink[1];" and we bow sub-'missively to thy will. Sanctify, therefore, this bread 'of affliction to the strengthening of our souls; and 'as we have no strength without Thee, let thy Spirit 'henceforth feed our souls with food convenient for us: 'for as we humbly trust daily to thy provident care for 'nourishment to our mortal bodies, so to thine abiding 'grace we also trust daily for support to our immortal 'souls. And if *every* day we thus pray, Thou, O Father, 'who knowest our daily necessities and their extent, 'Thou knowest also the *special* need of *to-day*. Indeed, 'if ever this petition were poured from our soul with 'a trustful and fervent desire for an answer of peace '—it is *now*. "O give to us" mourners, "give us '*this* day our daily bread." Let me remember, that 'this scene of mourning might have been over *my* 'grave! Where should I now have been?—Soon it 'must be, that "my body shall be committed to the 'ground; dust to dust!" Whither then shall my spirit 'go but to HIM who gave it? even to Thee, O God, 'my judge! Yet, forgive me first my trespasses! 'let me not stand before Thee in my sins; lest my 'resurrection to an eternal existence be a resurrec-'tion to eternal woe! O "*Forgive us our trespasses.*" 'For Christ's sake *forgiven*, my soul may rest in 'peace, and my body be saved to glory. *Unfor-'given*, alas! what awaits me but the worm that 'dieth not?—At this moment of deep sorrow, I feel

[1] Ps. lxxx. 5.

'more fully the weight, and the mercy likewise of the 'appointed *condition* of the forgiveness for which I 'pray; "*as we forgive them that trespass against us*," 'and, from my inmost soul, in all the sincerity of 'truth, I fulfil that *condition*. The injustice and op- 'pression, the malice and uncharitableness of men 'have sometimes tempted me to wish revenge. That 'wish is buried in yon grave. Could the loved one 'there laid, thence speak, his words of counsel would 'be the words of warning also—Forgive, as thou 'wouldest be forgiven. My heart admits not now 'an unkind feeling even to those who have most 'deeply injured me; no sun shall again go down upon 'my wrath; and should my enemies still hate, to 'them I leave all the hatred. I can love them, for 'his sake who died for me a sinner. The grave, by 'which I stand, proclaims, trumpet-tongued,—Life is 'all too short for enmity.'—If such, O mourner, be your reflections, you have sown in tears to reap in joy. What misery you escape! Suppose the dying to forgive his enemy, but the survivor to retain his hatred, and no token of reconciliation to have passed,—alas! alas! what sacrifice of wealth and even of passion would not that survivor now make for one moment only, to give and to receive forgiveness, ere they should meet at the judgment-seat! Whoso, even in matters of less moment, have felt the pain of having omitted to do what is absolutely irrecoverable,—some opportunity either of fulfilling a duty, or conferring a kindness irretrievably lost—they may in some manner judge the anguish of *his* heart, who has continued to cherish enmity which the death of the injured has left in its bitterness. How dreadful his self-reproach! O,

could he recall the last year, the last month, the last day, the last hour, the last minute! His wishes now are as vain, as his heart before was unbending. The duty has been foregone, and foregone irretrievably. He was inexorable. Death is more inexorable still. Happy they, even in the sad hour of mourning, who forgive as they would be forgiven. Again, each season of life has its own trials, and the grace of God can alone guide man safely through them. Therefore even the soul-subdued mourner prays his heavenly Father; "*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*" It is true that these words refer not to what are usually considered temptations to evil—those which the world *without* offers him; but those which the world *within* arrays against him. What to him now are riches, power, honour? The splendour of riches cannot bribe death to yield his prey. The voice of power cannot bid the grave give up the loved one. And as for worldly honour—that cannot compensate for the loss of those whose affection and love were the highest honour to which the heart aspired. Other temptations there are—those from the world *within*; and against *their* influence he prays. Of these the present hour is full. Nature tempts us to murmur at the sad dispensation. The young are cut down; or the strong man, the support of declining parents, has been removed in his full strength; or, to the surviving widowed one, left a lone struggler in this world of trouble, life is a blank; or the orphan sees before him no prospect but of misery, and knows no feelings but despair. In all such cases, the grace of God alone can check these murmurings of nature; calm our fears, soothe our sorrows, strengthen

our faith in the sure word of God, re-animate our hope in his providence and love, and so deliver us in safety from the evil into which otherwise our temptations would plunge us to our ruin. The mourner, therefore, fervently pours forth this his supplication; feeling, that his power to resist temptation here must come from on high, even as his hopes of peace here and hereafter must be drawn from the same eternal fountain of holiness and peace and glory.

PRAYER.

"Almighty God . . . . . everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

As this service draws near to its close, the Church, with a fidelity above even the tender maternal love she bears her children, guards them carefully against any misapplication of those glorious promises to which she has been directing their thoughts. What if she have committed to the ground the body of the departed, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, when the bodies of all men shall be raised from the dead by the power of Christ!—Christian faith takes for granted a belief in this truth. But as that resurrection will be followed by a life of eternal misery, as well as by a life of eternal happiness, our Church leaves the recompense of the one or the other to be awarded according to the rule of judgment laid down by the God of judgment. The righteous shall not go unrewarded; neither must the evil expect to go unpunished. The reckless unbeliever, the daring hypocrite, the unforgiving in their enmity, with the slanderer, and blasphemer, and all

other of mankind, at the last day shall rise and exist for ever: yet she deceiveth not the wicked by her own bright hopes in the prospect of eternity; she tells them that *their* "for ever" cannot be in peace. These are they who, by sin, "crucifying the Son of God afresh," will share the appalling retributive misery of those who having changed this mortal for immortality, must in their immortality see the Being "whom they pierced[1]." This prayer therefore opens with the very words of St. John, that "the spirits of them that depart hence *in the Lord*," are they who "live with Almighty God;" and "the souls of the *faithful*" they who "are with Him in joy and felicity." She then, with a truly evangelical spirit — set high above all considerations of this world, and losing all selfishness as she contemplates the dead — teaches us that we should for a season lay aside the consideration of our loss, calm the mournful expression of it, and even, in the noble and heaven-like courage of St. Paul, "give hearty thanks "unto God, for that it hath pleased him to deliver "this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful "world," where daily temptations to sin abound, and where the souls of the righteous are yet vexed more and more. From all this the dead are freed. O joy to the good! Whither take they their flight, but to a pure and holy habitation, where dwelleth righteousness; where temptations never enter; where fear of change never threatens; where sin and death are known no more? *Now*—even as you stand a mourner over the remains of the dead—the spirit which hath departed in the Lord is in joy and felicity; heaven his home; God his life. The wicked are further warned

[1] Rev. i. 7.

not to deceive themselves. When the Church proceeds in this prayer to beseech God, of his "gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom," she again declares who are, then, to have their perfect consummation and bliss—even they "who are departed in the true faith of his holy name." To the righteous, therefore, firm in faith; and to the penitent, eager to be reconciled in Christ, and to live and to die according to the faith of Christ; to *all* "who love God's law, there is great peace"[1]—to the wicked and the worldly, none. And is the dear departed delivered from the miseries of this sinful world? Be calm, my soul! Let my heart still its throbbings! Shall I grieve that one whom I loved is freed from misery? from the misery of sorrow and the heavier misery of sin? That were indeed a selfish grief. Nay, since though the dead return not to us, we shall go to them, let us humbly offer the petition so wisely prepared for us; and beseech Almighty God, "that it may please Him of his gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom." O Father, may thy kingdom come! Grant, we pray, that by thy grace both preventing and following us, we so learn to live, so learn to die, that with others, the blessed "who die in the Lord," and "depart in the true faith of his holy name," we may "have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory:" our spirits calmly waiting in that sojourn where the souls of the faithful for a season rest with patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, and the just made perfect, in

[1] Ps. cxix. 165.

joy and felicity; till our bodies, raised from the dust—new, immortal, glorious — shall again receive their kindred spirits, and "live for ever with the Lord," through Jesus Christ! O Thou gracious Spirit of power and holiness, prepare me for that hour, which shall deliver us all out of the miseries of this sinful world; and from the storm and tempest of the present life bear me to the still calm waters of that life, for which we look in the world that is to come[1]!

[1] Various are the uses of adversity, when sanctified by a Christian view of the dispensation. The successive trials of life, indeed, are chiefly intended to wean our souls from the fear and love of the world, and fix their first great aim upon the kingdom of God and his righteousness. They have another object also. Whilst they work patience to God's will, so long as He see fit for his own glory and our own final welfare to afflict us, they make us even long for that hour, which shall deliver us from their misery; and they reconcile us to the death of others: for if to the good, death be gain, we mourn, not them, but ourselves. This is clear to our own apprehension. Where christian hope abides, there poverty, sickness, disappointment, pain, misery all such sorrows unite in smoothing our passage to the grave, and give to death a welcome Are light and darkness in plain contrast! Lo! the contrast of one dying, patient amid the miseries of penury, and pain, and desolateness, and of one whom death overtakes, trusting to the smiles and enjoyments of prosperity! "O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a "man that liveth at rest in his possessions! unto the man that hath "nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things." Not so to the strugglers and sufferers in the world's sore strife! "O "death! *acceptable* is thy sentence unto the needy, and unto him "whose strength faileth, that is now in the last age, and is vexed "with all things *." His soul, patient to the end, so long as his heavenly Father sees fit to lay his heavy hand upon him, yet is ready to change misery for rest. And must we not give hearty thanks unto God, that He hath delivered our suffering brother out of the miseries of this sinful world, and granted a death of peace to a life of warfare!

* Eccles. xli. 2.

THE COLLECT.

"O merciful God . . . . Redeemer. Amen."

THAT we fail not the high and happy hopes to which the last prayer encouraged us to look, bearing every thought far above the world, its joys and its sorrows, and sustaining us even in our deep dark sorrow at the grave—the Church anxiously now directs us to pray for means that we may each individually attain that state of faith and holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord[1]." The Collect supplied for this purpose is a supplication for such a saving faith in Him

St. Paul would seem as though he invited his dear Philippians to prepare themselves for this thankfulness on his own behalf, when he declares, that however resigned he is to the trials of life, so long as it may please God to give him life, yet death is that he looks to as his gain. Active in every good word and work, and conscious that such being "the fruit of his labour while he liveth in the flesh," he is a blessing to his brethren in Christ Jesus, and a setter-forth of the glory of his God; and that, therefore, it is good for him still to abide in the flesh—yet he at once declares, whilst "*to live is Christ*, to *die* is *gain*;" and that "to depart is *far better*[*]."

It may be, that some child of sorrow opens these pages. Your bright morning sun of life has set in clouds. It is not that age has dimmed your joys; or that you have pain for ease, and infirmities for strength and activity. *That* change must be to all who live long. Your sufferings are from other causes. You once had competence; perhaps wealth, perhaps greatness: you now are poor and unknown. Fame was yours, and honour among men: now, like Job, "your day is darkness; and the shadow of death stained it." Children and dear friends once blessed you: death hath removed the one, change the other. Your sorrows press you sore. Alas! is it so? Then comes the Gospel voice of consolation to you, in all its force, and with all its soothings—"Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees!" God in his own good time will deliver you, and death itself be *welcome*.

[1] Phil. i. 23. [*] Heb. xii. 13.

who alone is the Lord of life, spiritual and eternal—even Jesus Christ himself, "the resurrection and the life"—as may change our mourning into joy. In Him we have the blessed hope of a resurrection to life eternal; seeing that though with the Saviour we yield our bodies, as He did, to death, none shall die eternally who live in Him and believe in Him, and die in Him. Henceforward, therefore, what is the object which wisdom bids us hold ever in our view? what the blessing to which piety meekly bends her prayer, for herself and for all whom she loves? Is it not "that life of righteousness," to which "we beseech thee, O Father, from the death of sin to raise us?" If the prayer be mercifully heard and graciously answered, away with unworthy fears of death! Who shall dare to doubt, but that if we be thus raised spiritually, we shall be raised eternally? and "that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in Him, as our hope is, our departed" loved one rests? Nay, brighter still is our prospect. That Rest will be Bliss. Whoso is found standing clothed in the righteousness of Christ, shall he not "be found acceptable in thy sight," O merciful God? We plead the blood of the Son which was shed for sinners; we plead the mercy of the Father, which gave the Son to die for us; we plead the agony of that Redeemer—his passion—his death—for pardon, reconciliation, and peace; and finally we plead not his resurrection only as an earnest of our own, but also his ascension into heaven, with his assurance, that He ascended thither "to prepare a place for us[1]."—By all these pleas we cheer our drooping hearts, and in the strength of a heavenly trust -for it rests upon hea-

[1] John xiv. 3.

venly promises—we live in the firm hope that, at the hour of death, Thou, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer wilt be with us, and even in the day of judgment wilt deliver us. O the coming of that day! Terror to thine enemies! To thy faithful servants, joy! joy beyond our minds to conceive! The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him: before Him shall be gathered all nations—the loved one you mourn, and you yourself among the myriads so gathered. To the good, how joyous the anticipation of that hour, when, as pardon and acceptance and peace have been here the recompense of penitence and faith in Christ Jesus, power and honour and glory shall be the crowning of their hope in sharing for ever the kingdom of their God! O gracious Father! the mind cannot conceive mercy so great, bounty so vast, love so unbounded. Can it be, that we—worms and no men; *we*, sinners in our thoughts, and imperfect at best in our resolves—can it be, that we, dust and ashes, are at last to be so exalted? shall we in very deed be raised from the depth of sin and mortality to holiness so pure, and immortality so glorious, that never again shall the one dim? never again the other change? and is all this secured to the faithful in the everlasting covenant sealed by the blood of the Lamb of God, slain "from the foundation of the world," and "prepared for us from the beginning" thereof? Well may my heart, even in its sadness, rejoice. Well may my soul triumph. Lo the welcoming! "Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom!" "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "Smitten down like the grass," by the stroke of

death, which has cut off one so dear—yet must not my heart be afraid! The dead *shall* rise again; and the good shall pass to a land of rest, where "eye "hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered "into the heart of man to conceive the good things "which God hath prepared for them who love him." Thus, to everlasting life, death is the appointed way. O my soul! fear not thyself to walk therein; nor sorrow as men without hope, for those who tread that path before thee! The trials of life pass away; the pains of death cease; the dark drear stillness of the grave shall once again be broken; this mortal shall put on immortality; sorrow and pain shall be known no more; but heavenly joys shall never end; to the drear silence of death shall succeed *everlasting* songs of praise; and by the mingling and according voices of angels and the spirits of the just made perfect, shall *for ever* be raised in heaven the triumphant strain—"Hallelujah! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah—Amen!

THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*"

Into the mourner's heart—with every feeling softened, every thought spiritualized, every desire sanctified—the closing benediction of this service cannot but sink deep: quickening a dormant repentance, confirming a wavering resolution, leading to a bold avowal of faith, and by divine aid so influencing to holy virtue, that though he sow in tears, he shall reap in joy. Where are the wildering thoughts which agitated his soul, when his steps bore him to the grave,

to weep there! as Jesus wept, and has for ever sanctified our tears for the dead, so he now weeps. But, O heavenly Father! all he ever knew of Thee and of thy love, from perhaps a mother's earliest teaching to his own searching in the treasures of thy word, rushes to his mind quicker than light. He remembers that in thy house are *many* mansions; and he humbly trusts that there the departed has found a home of rest, and that there the same rest awaits him. In this trust his heart reposes; and in the prospect of it, he throws from him every doubt and every fear: all is calm even in his sorrow; all is peaceful, even in his mourning; for what fear can they know whose God is Jehovah, the Lord God omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; a God, in whom they find safety, joy, and glory—his fatherly care their everlasting safety; his redeeming love their everlasting joy; and his holy fellowship their everlasting glory?

You leave the grave—How changed your view of death! When the knell summoned you to the scene of mourning, you dreaded the hour in which you looked for a hard struggle between courage and dismay; between resignation and despair; an hour when all around you would be dark, and fearful, and terrible. With trembling steps you moved thither. Behold! the hour is past—the struggle over. You have found light for darkness, you have found courage for fear, and for terror you have found peace—peace, not as the world giveth; but as *He* giveth, to whom, invisible though He be, faith hath led you. To Him you have been privileged to pray, in Him you have rejoiced to trust, and from Him, though no voice was heard, the Spirit declared the glorious truths, that "the dead,

who die in the Lord, are blessed;" and that "*whosoever* liveth and believeth in Him shall not die eternally." These words fell upon your ear; and, happily, not in vain. O, from what a weight of deep, unbearable sorrow did they relieve you! what a happy calm have they brought to you! You ask yourself, 'Why 'sorrow I for the dead as one without hope? Are they 'any more in pain, or sorrow, or misery, that they need 'my tears and my sympathy? Let me consider! *I* am 'mourning those whom *God* is blessing! For them, 'therefore, weep I no more. For myself, indeed, and 'for those dear afflicted ones who share with me the 'loss of a loved guide, and friend, and counsellor—for 'them and for myself, tears will flow; and whilst 'tears are a relief to me, and a tribute of love and 'honour to the dead, e'en let them flow! Are they 'not sanctified by the Saviour, who himself wept his 'friend.'—O mourner! in an hour like this, what to you is all the world? Nay, whilst feelings like these occupy the soul, not the saddest hour of woe can tempt to murmur or to fear. What if, for a moment, as you heard the scattered earth meet its kindred dust committed to the ground, a chilling dread thrilled your heart, as though all hope were crushed! God has enabled you, not perhaps to forget the past, but so to conquer the memory of its terror, that you no more shun to recall the scene of mourning around the grave. Rather, time itself seems to linger, ere God accomplish the number of his elect, and yourself be admitted of the happy number. There to meet your loved one is your ever cheering anticipation, and your ardent prayer. Who knoweth but that, "delivered out of the miseries of this sinful world," and being, as

we humbly trust, in endless felicity, he is even now —so the heart of affection fondly thinks—witnessing at once your earthly sorrow and your heavenly peace; ready and eager with others, the spirits of the just made perfect, to welcome you to their blest company, when, through the atonement of the Saviour in whom you have learned to trust, you also may have passed through the grave and gate of death, to your joyful resurrection, and been found meet for your inheritance in heaven.

True! when you return again to the duties of life—however your course may be one of active virtue—who so cold of heart as not to know that sorrow will return, and sadden your thoughts and your dwelling? Those ties which bind us in love and friendship cannot be severed, but that the severing must wound, and wound deeply. And the tenderer the love, the more generous the friendship, the keener will be the pain, the more enduring the misery. Was all bright with you before this day's cloud of sorrow overcast your sky? Did prosperity smile upon you? Was it yours to know health and competence and ease? and were all your other blessings crowned by the presence of the loved one whom you mourn; either husband, or wife, or child, or brother, or sister, or kindred, or friend? Was that presence your delight, and your joy, and your safety? Did you, in the full enjoyment of your numerous blessings, hope for long continuance of them; and was there then seen no sign of change, no gathering cloud in a sky so clear? . . Alas! this radiant hope is now quenched—sunk in the troubled waters of affliction. Be it so! Yet, like the evening sun in the ocean, sinking to its rest, your hope will

rise to a still brighter day. You have heard a voice from heaven; and its sound has given you new life—"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord!"

And now, my reader, having finished our meditations upon the services provided by our Church for duly observing the more memorable occasions which mark Christian life, from its early dawn to its close—having shown the excellence of these services, as adapted to their purpose; quickening our repentance, strengthening our faith, confirming our hope, and so regulating our understanding and our affections, that they may be made instrumental, through grace, to a holy and religious life,—what remains but that I enforce upon you the importance of adopting, in the conduct of life, the principles which are there laid down! Resting, as these services do, upon the Gospel of Christ, and deriving their worth and their power from their entire conformity with his word and Spirit, they are so admirably fitted to guide us all, whether our condition be the highest or the lowest, in the appointed way which leadeth to heaven, that whoso well heedeth the doctrines there maintained, following the counsels there supplied, and keeping in view the promises there set forth, may humbly trust to be established in peace as in righteousness, in happiness as in holiness; and so pass through things temporal, that he finally lose not the things eternal; sanctified in life; in death and judgment saved; and, at last, rejoicingly at rest.

Having, however, addressed myself chiefly to the mother, it may be permitted to point out to her espe-

cially, the wisdom of fixing in the minds of her children their Christian faith, not only as a profession of belief, to be felt and cherished in the heart with all its glorious hopes of futurity; but as a principle of action; an abiding and active power which shall never be wanting in those seasons of trial to the soul, where duty to God calls one way, and the temptations of the world draw another; where the will of man is opposed to the will of God; where sin would debase to earth, and holiness would raise to heaven; where the fear or the love of the world would deter from duty, and the fear and love of God would fix us in it. In all these cases, unless there be at hand a principle, whose monitions are well heeded, the mind, in youth most chiefly, is ready to be enticed by pleasure from the noblest resolves, and be deceived, even by self-love, into any belief however vague, and into any course however evil; and so exposed to misery and ruin. Nor can it be denied, that even the worldly-learned and the worldly-wise, however elevated their views of conduct towards their fellow-creatures, will find their learning profitless, and their wisdom but foolishness before God, if they lack the childlike wisdom, which the word of truth has declared to be beyond price—if they lack the Spirit from on high to give their character its noblest stamp in this world, and fit them, as immortal beings, to change the self-denying obedience of man on earth, into the willing and joyful service of angels in heaven. But when Christian principle is the recognised standard of right and wrong, for the thoughts, the affections, the will, and the conduct—regulating every feeling, and directing every energy of the soul—*then*, all is well; in youth and age, in health and sickness,

in prosperity and adversity, in life and death. Let but the heart be full of trust towards God, calmed and strengthened by habitual devotion, with gratitude for his love and reverence for his power, what a lofty freedom does it gain from the base trammels of the world! what steadiness of purpose, which no clashing interests can move! what a noble courage in resisting temptation; in spurning the ways of evil; in upholding itself in the course of christian honour and christian virtue! "The world itself is to pass away, and the fashion of it"—so feels the Christian; and he scorns to be the slave of aught so vain. He stayeth himself upon his God; whose word standeth fast, and who knoweth no change, but is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. When thus your children are thoroughly persuaded that there is a mightier power than any on earth to shield them; a stronger arm ready to defend them than ever drew mortal sword [1]; they are strong, though not in their own strength; they fight the good fight, though their armour be the armour of God, and their weapon the sword of the Spirit of God; they gain the victory, though another fight for them; they conquer—nay, they are more than conquerors—though it be through Him that loved them [2]. Even when the light of life shall fade away, and the soul must pass swift and alone unto the yet unknown future world, the faithful soldier of Christ will fear no evil. His Judge is his Saviour—his God, his Redeemer—and Jehovah himself, his exceeding great reward."

[1] Ps. xli. 6; xcviii. 1. [2] Gal. ii. 20.

INDEX.

ABSOLUTION, 308. 439.
ADAM, "the old," its meaning, 90.
Adversity, its uses, 518, note.
Affections, not destroyed by the Gospel, but regulated, 127, note.
Afflictions, sent in love, 414 and note, 431.
by them the righteous tried as in a furnace, 430.
Christ our example in them, 432.
Angels; the faithful communicant joins in their services, 314.
Apostles' Creed, 134.
Arian, heresy so called, 276.
Armour of God, 110, n.
Ascension of Christ, its proof, 320 and n.
Association of time, place, and circumstance—its power, 315 and n. 328. 399 and n.

B.

Baptism of infants, 43.
of Jesus, 53.
the object of our prayers in, 71.
its form appointed by Christ, 96.
by immersion or sprinkling, 96, n.
Belief, the articles of, 82. 122. 134. 275. 434.
rest on God's word, 88, n.
Believers, the faithful, in Christ, never die, 469.
Birth, new, 45, n.
Blessed, who are the, 501. 504.
who are in death, 505.
Blessing, the scriptural forms of, 363 and n.
Bread, spiritual, 113. 220.
Burial of the dead, service for, 467.
the study of it a salutary exercise for the Christian, 468.

C.

CANAAN, the heavenly, 177, n.
Catechism, the Church, 130.
to be taught early, 239.
"Changes and chances," the term explained, 354, n.
Charity, Christian; its extent, 237.
its necessity, 301.
Children, numerous, a blessing, 20. 392.
called to baptism, 57. 60. 99, n.
teach them early to forgive, 114.
pray for them in sickness, 452.
remind us of our own childhood, 452, n.
the care of the Church, 446.
have special interest in the Redeemer's death, 165 and n.
this thought is a special call upon the parents' gratitude to God, 166.
their early sorrows, 285, n. 342, n.
death of, 489 and n.
undutiful, a sorrow to their parents, 391, n.
undutiful, threatened by God for their parents' sins, 163 and n.
CHRIST, always God as well as man, 136. 351 and n.
an example, 175. 264. 350. 432.
his intercession availing, 344.
died for all men, 333, note.

Christ died for sinners, 311.
pitieth our infirmities, 299.
his cruel suffering, 101.
his agony, 113
his death, 138.
his resurrection, 84.
his ascension, 139. 320 344.
his promises sure, 73.
his promises conditional, 74.
through Him we can do all things, 433.
his piety in youth, 61. 173. 264.
his sacrifice offered once for all, 233.
his second coming, 521.
Christmas-day, 315.
Christian; his inheritance, 131.
his life a trial and struggle, 91 and n 120
never ashamed of Christ, 101
his soldiership, 103. 110, n 259, n 280 364.
the faithful welcomed, 521.
principles, their inestimable value, 527
Christian and Jewish dispensations, the analogy between them, 244, n.
Christians, the sons of God, and fellow-citizens with the saints, 109, and n.
Church, she teaches what the word of God commands, 242.
the cross of Christ her glory, 238
her humility, 104. 117. 354. 366.
the faithful love her worship, 121 and n.
her maternal anxious care, 124. 353. 365. 458.
Christ's holy Catholic, 144.
in its welfare the people deeply interested, 146, n
prays for children, 446.
built upon Christ and his apostles, 407. 426. 429, n.
militant, the prayer for, 280.
her charity, 366.
eminently scriptural, 367.
she faithfully warns the wicked, 526.
Churching of women, 7.
Circumcision of infants, 57, n.
Commandments, the ten; their history, 157.
response after each, 271.
Communion, holy, 266.
renewal of baptismal covenant, 364, n
guarded in its offers of blessing, 286
who are called thereto, 301.
partaker of in *faith*, 234.
partaking thereof, a reasonable act, 235.
of the sick, 465.
Confession to God, 288. 304.
Confirmation, 245.
preparation for, 245.
its occasion very affecting, 250.
in the Jewish Church, 244.
Conscience, a wounded, its misery, 438.
Consolation, 442.
Contentment, necessary for the attainment of Christian peace, 193, n.
Coveting, the source of wrong and robbery, 193.
Cross of Christ, his servants' trust, 331.
Cup of blessing, in the communion, 16.

D.

Death, the fear of, subdued by religion, 284.
of the righteous, leaves blessing to their children, 284, n.
reunion of the righteous, after, 285.
of children, 454, n.
unto sin, 479.
always at hand, 492.
the uncertainty of its time, 485.
its sting is sin, 486.
of the body, its preparation for glory, 482.
frees the righteous from misery, 516.
Devotion, season of, season of safety, 343
Diligence, spiritual and temporal, will have God's blessing, 220, n.
Dishonesty of every kind, is sin, 204, n.
Division in families, ruin to peace, 378 and n.
Duties, religious and social unite, 195.
Dying, the Christian, daily, explained, 479 and n.

E.

Early instruction in religious and other learning, 239.
Easter-day, 317.
Edify, the term explained, 247, n.
Elect, they must persevere, 104. 156.
Envy, its character and influence, 194.
Eternity, its awfulness, 153. 495.
Evil-speaking, a sin against God, 207.
Example, evil, its danger, 481.

F.

Faith, man's great comfort, 55. 59. 151. 344. 427, n.
without obedience, dead, 88. 119. 123. 198, n.
its unity, 95. 146. 281.
must be uniform and practical, 101.
whereby the soul feeds on the bread of life, 335, n.
False shame, its danger, 102.
Fearful, the, encouraged, 311.
Filial gratitude, always due to parents, 126. 154. 199.
Fool; this and other harsh expressions to be avoided, 202, n.
Forbearance, Christian virtue, 372. 409.
Forgiveness, necessary for our peace, 222.
its advantages, 181.
its conditions, 114. 223. 437.
not to be delayed, 513.
Friend; such is God to man, 27 and n. 351.

G.

Glory, heavenly; its different degrees, 483.
God, our duty towards, 196.
our only sure trust, 37. 62. 67. 133, n. 400. 447.
greater than our hearts, 86.
omnipresent, 141. 356.
eternal, 360.
incomprehensible, 142.
his name; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be hallowed, 167.
God, the supreme moral Governor of the universe, 208. 355. 393. 426, n.
Lord of death as of life, 424.
the searcher of hearts, 268, n. 439.
present at his holy table, 291.
before Him, no man justified, 298.
his mercy is the communicant's only help and trust, 326. 329. 475.
our *friend*, 27 and n. 351.
omnipresent, appeal to, 497.
able to create us again after death, 484.
Godfathers and godmothers, their responsibility, 43.
Godliness, great the mystery of, 106. 142.
Gospel, called the kingdom of heaven, 73, n.
the gift of its light to this land, 323.
Grace, its several meanings, 210.
of God, *continually* needed, 118. 251. 254, n. 261. 287, n.
delivers us from evil, 225.
its all-sufficiency, 238, n.
preventing, is our joy, 62. 65. 339. 358 and n.
daily increase in, 254 and n.
special, explained, 210 and n.
Gratitude to God, motive for obedience, 331. 336. 337, n. 364.
Grave, thoughts at the, 488—492.

H.

Hall, Bishop, his filial gratitude, 14.
Heart requires cultivation, 221 and n.
Heaven; its bliss, 36.
our rest in, 502.
the righteous have its foretaste in death, 503, n.
Hell, place of departed spirits, 83, n. 139.
Holy Ghost the Comforter, 85. 322. 444.
Honesty ennobles the poorest, 205.
Honour, filial, never ceases, 176. 177, n.
Horne, Bishop, 246, n.

I.

Idleness, the fruitful source of evil, 187.
Idolatry, 161.
Ignatius, 479. 480.
Industry, a Christian motive, 207.
Infants, their helplessness wins our love and care, 61. 165 174.
their world of joy in sleep, 115, n.
unconscious alike of their natural and spiritual birth, 125. 232.
Injuries to man, an offence against God, 204, n
Israel, their passage through the Red Sea, a type of baptism, 49.

J.

Jacob, 165, n.
Jewish and Christian Dispensation, the analogy between, 244, n.
Judas the traitor, 264
Judgment-day, sudden in its coming, 52, n.

L.

Leighton, Archbishop, 314, n.
Life, spiritual, must be active, 47,
of soul and body, each God's gift, and analogous, 113. 255, n.
its constant changes, 490.
Loyalty, a Christian virtue, 199 and n.

M.

Man, his insufficiency without God's grace, 209.
Manna, spiritual, 341.
Marriage Bond, its sanctity and blessing, 182 368. 375. 387. 403. 404, n. 406
its influence upon society as well as individuals, 370, 371.
represents spiritual unity betwixt Christ and his Church, 370. 404.
garment, 288, n.
feast, our Lord present at, 369. 390. 404, n. 406.
Matrimony, solemnization of, 366.
Meet partakers at the Sacrament, who, 297, n.
Memory of past deliverances, gives hope, 55
Mind, its expanded power in a future world, 155
in its saddest affliction, how relieved, 463.
Ministers, their labours vain unless blessed of God, 282.
anxious care for their people, 93.
claim their people's affection, 200, n.
their authority, 280
plead in Christ's stead, 291.
judge not sin, but leave judgment to God, 295.
Moses communed with God, 385.
Mothers, their love and influence, 4. 69 92.
their gratitude for safe deliverance after child-birth, 9. 13.
wisely correct their children, 34.
train them to self control, 121. 127 181. 223. 343, n
their instructions surely blest, 126.
Mourners comforted, 507. 523—525.

N.

Naaman, his leprosy and recovery, 242 and n.
Name, the Christian, 96. 100.
its accompanying responsibilities, 131, n 132.
a man's good, *sacred*, 192.
Neighbour, our duty to, 198.
Nicene Creed, 275.
why so called, 276, n
Noah; his preservation, a type of baptism, 49.
his obedience, our example, 51 and n.

O.

Obedience to God, imperative, 75. 156. 219.
though not meritorious, necessary, how illustrated, 216, n.
rendered easy by the Spirit of God assisting us, 133. 197
to the laws of our country, a Christian bounden duty, 200.

P.

Pardon for the penitent, 290.
Parents, the force of their example, 22.
their responsibility, 63.
their oft noble self-denial, 175.
Parental authority, foundation of government, 174.
Peace, duty of living in a spirit of, 342, n.
of God, 363, n. 365, n.
at the last, 134. 261. 366. 457.
Penitence, its blessed fruits, 493.
Penitent; he may live to God's glory, 350.
the son's address to his sorrowing mother, 441, n.
Peter, St., rose from his fall, 74. 264.
Poor, encouraged to benevolence according to their power, 277.
if religious, happy, 20.
under God's special care, 40.
Prayer, the Lord's, explained, 23. 108. 213. 256. 267. 340. 395. 416. 506.
its fulness, 108, n.
for those troubled in mind or conscience, 460. 463, n.
in itself valueless, till sanctified, 161.
why required, 162. 212.
faithful, calls down blessing, 226, n.
without conduct, vain, 345.
our ignorance and infirmity in, 360.
through Christ, God promises to hear, 362.
Preaching, its effects, 121, n. 122.
Preparation for death, its wisdom, 481.
Preventing grace, 62. 65. 339. 358 and n.
Principles of the Gospel, their inestimable value, 246, n.
Professing Christians, if no more, mock God, 297.
Prosperity, not to lead us to forget God, 54.
Psalm xxxix. explained, 471.
lxvii. 393.
lxxi. 444.
cxvi. 12.
cxxvii. 19.
cxxviii. 390.
Punishment, threats of, deter from evil, 86. 153.

R.

Recollections in a future state, 508, n.
Recompense of reward, undeserved, but promised, 429 and n.
Reformation, the, 129.
Regeneration, 99, n. 105. 117. 122, n.
Religion, the nation's strength, 275, n.
Renovation, 99, n.
Renunciation of sin, in Baptism, 81.
Repentance, its necessity, 289. 300.
true, its joy, 307.
Resignation, motives for, 510.
Resurrection of Jesus Christ, 317.
of our bodies, 86. 152. 476.
its certainty, 483.
Reunion after death, 499. 508.
Revenge, the wish for, removed by death, 513.
Rich, the, exhorted to benevolence, 277.
Righteous, even in sickness live to God's glory, 447.
their glorious rest, 486.
their foretaste of it, 503, n.
Ring, the marriage token, 383.

S.

Sabbath-day, 170.
Sacraments, the two, 229 and n.
their outward signs sanctified, 231.
an account of, when added to the Church Catechism, 243.
Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, why are you absent from it? 291.
typified under the Jewish dispensation, 231.
Saints, communion of, 83. 149.
Salvation by baptism, conditional, 133.
Sceptre of Judah, departed before Christ came, 83, n.
Self-control, 181.
Self-denial, 202.
Self-examination, 288.
Servants, their responsibility, 187, n.
Service, the Christian's, is spiritual, 346.
must be willing, 87.
congregational, 147 and n.

Sick unto death, prayer for them, 456.
Sickness, God's chastening in love, 496.
season of profit to the soul, 494, n.
Sin makes man wretched, 223.
to be resisted, 116.
its remembrance grievous, 306.
original, 72. 90. 193. 455.
a just sense of it a remedy against pride, 193.
Sins, forgiveness of, 150.
Sinners, their boldness weakens not God's power or honour, 226.
Slander, the sin of; a mean spirit, its misery and punishment, 191.
Slanderer, warned, 289.
Sovereigns, prayers for them and their people, 273.
what their noblest ambition, 281.
Spiritual aid, faith in it reasonable, 143.
Surprise, its danger instanced in St. Peter, 8, n.
SWARTZ, 312.

T.

Temptation, 225, n.
conquered, 260.
Thought, its awful rapidity, 305, n.
Time, its shortness, 473. 475.
TRINITY, the holy, 324.
baptized into the name of, 96.
the form of blessing in marriage, 389.
in that name absolved, 441.
in that name, the Church blessed, 448.
in unity, 96. 98.
our prayers to the Holy, 505.
Trust in God, 498.
under affliction, 102.

U.

Unbelief in others affects not our faith, 264.
what is its secret spring, 481.
Union with Christ, 295 and n.
Unity, our safety, 281. See Faith.
Unkindness, all, to be checked, 179.

V.

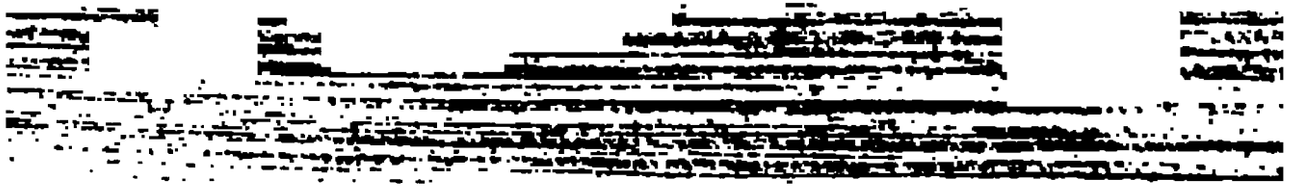
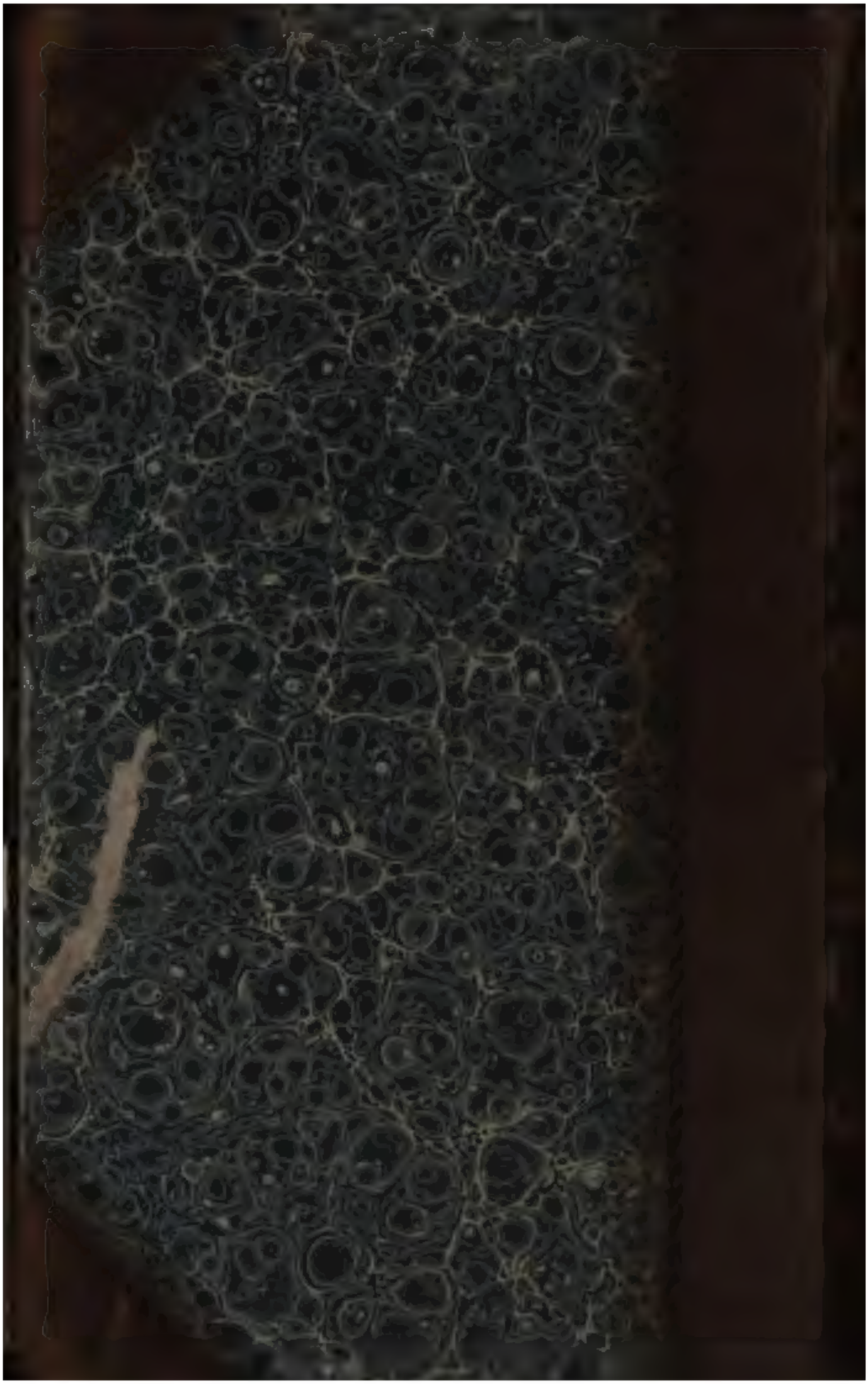
Vengeance, not man's, but God's, 115, n.
Visitation of the sick, 413.
Vow in baptism, 76.
Vows made in sickness, to be paid in health, 16.
Vulgar tongue, the English language, 129.

W.

Watchfulness, daily required, 120.
Water, a type of the Spirit, and sanctified by the baptism of Christ, 58.
Whitsunday, 322.
Wicked, they *must* cease *at last* from troubling, 502.
Witness, to bear false, is sin; the commandment against it takes a wide range, 189.
Word of God, the sword of the Spirit, 110.
how to be received, 357 and n.
World, its dangers and difficulties, 344—347. 356. 370. 384.
its evil to be resisted, 76.
Worship, the term, as used in the Marriage Service, explained, 384. n.

Y.

Youth, guarded and comforted by a religious faith, 247, n. 255. 265.

THE END.

GILBERT & RIVINGTON, Printers, St. John's Square, London.